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BOMBAY BRANCH

OF THE

Royal Asiatic Society.

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"Whelk ... swallow'd my foot ... swaggers I know ... [illegible]

IMPRESSIONS

OF

ENGLAND.

BY

86204
ac

COUNT EDOUARD DE MELFORT.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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IMPRESSIONS

OF

ENGLAND.

LETTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

My dear Augustus,

You allude in your last to the letters I wrote you from England in 1817, during my first visit to that country. Our military career had then abruptly terminated, and we were both restored to our families. You departed for the South of France; I rejoined my mother in Great Britain, where I not only met her kind welcome, but the courteous hospitality of those relations against whom only a short time before I had been "ranged in battle array."

But those letters, which you are kind enough to say amused and interested you, must have

been necessarily very imperfect. They could only have comprised the feeble sketches of a very young observer. If I remember well, they contained slight pictures of the different ranks of society which fell under my view,—in fact, of everything that I either saw or heard,—but all in a very superficial manner. Besides, I had already lived too much for my actual age,—I had been thrown into too many different scenes; my imagination had been too continually excited; my mind too constantly habituated to the reception of new impressions, for me to be capable of estimating calmly and impartially a country not my own.

Remember also that I had already passed four years at Naples; where, emphatically speaking, my *life* commenced, as if to contradict the Neapolitan adage, "*Vedi Napoli, poi morire.*" Four years under that splendid sky! at a court where pomp, military parades, and festivals of every description, succeeded each other incessantly; where whole nights of loveliness and enjoyment were spent on that unrivalled bay, in the royal barks, gliding rapidly

but silently along to the sound of the most harmonious music! All this acted powerfully on the senses and imagination of a youth of eighteen. — Do I not even now behold that scene of fairy-land! Vesuvius grumbling still, whilst the reflection of her burning lava seems to dispute with the silver light of the resplendent moon an empire over the waves!

I found myself suddenly transported thence to Upper Italy, to the camp on the shores of the Mincio, to the army commanded by Prince Eugène (Beauharnais). I made my two campaigns, gained two ranks, and received from the Emperor himself, in front of my regiment, the then so highly valued cross. All this was gone, all had vanished!—I was, as I said above, in England, and had not yet attained my twenty-second year. I was, I fear, but a poor philosopher to judge of or describe one of the most remarkable countries in the world.

What I here bring forward as an excuse for my small capacity as an observer formerly, is not meant to announce any very wonderful power at present, nor to lead you to expect

anything very preferable in the letters I shall now address to you. But, as you justly say, some years more of life and experience, and a second—and this time a very prolonged sojourn in England—have enabled me better to appreciate all that surrounded me, and also to observe on a larger scale. My share, moreover, of the pains and griefs common to all men, (and they have fallen heavily on me,)—those moral sufferings especially, the effects of which, when profound, are never effaced—these, I say, must help to form the mind and rectify the judgment more even than the years that have passed. They also dispose the mind and feelings to a gentle philanthropy, which makes us consider our fellow-men, and indeed all beings, in a more benevolent, a more generous manner, without, at the same time, diminishing the faculty of distinguishing what is evil, or even of seizing upon what is ridiculous.

Let me premise that I have no set plan—nor will I form one. I will not even promise you to classify my descriptions, or separate my subjects: I shall write under the dictation of my

recollections as they occur. Do not reckon on any political reflections; not only because I profess to have but little knowledge of the matter, but because I almost dread the presence of those who do,—they talk by far too much about it.

I shall not venture on many subjects. Some will be avoided from want of sufficient information; others, because I do not think them compatible with the mere sketches of society as seen by a man of the world, who is that and no more.

In re-perusing this letter, I perceive that I have made a sort of preface. Well, it has, in any case, one merit,—that of not being long.

Adieu! yours ever.

LETTER II.

Nationality of Englishmen—Their habit of order—Their demeanour,—English Liberty.—An English Family.

WHENCE arises that public spirit which exists throughout England? that spirit of common accord which extends from the aristocratical great to the lowest plebeian?—and this in a country where there exists so many modifications of religious and political belief, and such a separation of ranks,—where the scale of different classes and conditions is so extended, and yet so distinctly marked! I mean by spirit of common accord, this: that under whatever aspect, position, character, or education you consider the Englishman, he is always essentially English. However he may be led away by opinion on any subject, fact, or circumstance peculiar to some individual interest, to some

particular portion of society, or to some sepa rate province—whatever strong opposition of sentiments may exist upon secondary causes, all discordance ceases when the general well-being is at stake; then all Englishmen are as one!

If I were to tell you that you would never find upon a road in England, a stone, or any other impediment, I should seem to make a very unimportant observation. It is, nevertheless, true that no Englishman, whether peasant or gentleman, who should see on a road any object, such as broken glass, (which might wound a horse's foot)—a stone left by negligence, or anything dropped accidentally from a cart, but which might cause by night a serious accident—would leave such impediment; he would immediately stoop down, pick it up, and throw it aside. This is not done for his own personal convenience,—he has already seen the danger, and avoided it: he has no particular interest in the passengers who may go that road during the night, but he will do as I say. Well, ascending from this trivial occurrence to the

great and desirable feeling of acting in common accord for the national good, you will find the same union, the same general interest; each individual, according to his social position and rank, forming a link in the chain which supports the entire community.

I asserted also that the difference of rank is distinctly observed. But this is not gained by force, nor by established laws, (at least as far as I know,) nor is it imposed by exactions over ignorance. No; it is caused by a general impulse, by a habit of order, in every individual of each class, however humble his actual position may be.

This union is still more strongly cemented by the numerous bodies which are established in England in every branch of every profession or trade. These assemble to discuss the general interests of their society. There, the character of each individual is placed strongly before his equals, and his services for the general good are recompensed by public thanks, or occasionally by offerings or presents, which are preserved in his family as honourable heir-looms.

If, on the contrary, he has deserved censure, he meets with remonstrance and general reprobation.

I must now speak of that national dignity which, it appears to me, pervades all classes. Let us take an example from one of the lowest. I do not know any country where one is served with so much respect, with so much silent attention, as in England; nor where the distance between master and servant is more strictly marked: and yet this is not accompanied on the part of the latter by any baseness of demeanour, nor is it the effect of compelled servitude; but the servant shows that in his capacity he respects himself, and that familiarity would be no more to his taste than to that of his master.

Proceeding into a class a little higher, and thence gradually ascending, you will find in each situation the same composed behaviour, always proportioned to the rank in society. The English appear to know their respective rights, and the laws which protect them. You may see the possessor of the merest hut

standing in his doorway, and you read in his countenance, and in his whole manner, "An Englishman's house is his castle:"* he knows that no constable, no strength—not even that of the king himself, can force open that door if the master refuses, and that to enter violently a formal act of the law is necessary.

On the Continent, the English are generally accused of arrogance, I think frequently with injustice: the national air of independence in their manner is misunderstood. It should be remembered that every Englishman, however distant he may be from his native country, feels that the protecting hand of England is stretched out over him: he knows that at the first cry of distress his mother-country is there to reply; that in every spot he finds the *envoyés* of his nation ready to protect and support him, compelled by the strict instructions they receive to this effect; and he

* In a moment of enthusiasm, while speaking in Parliament, the famous Lord Chatham exclaimed: "An Englishman's house is his castle! It may be a straw-built shed,—the winds of heaven may whistle through it, the elements may enter it; but the king cannot—the king dares not!"

knows, again, that he, as a simple individual, if he meet with injustice or neglect, can shake an ambassador from his seat by simply sending his just complaint—no matter from what distance—to Parliament, where he is sure to be heard and attended to.

May he not then be pardoned, if, whilst entertaining such thoughts, his head is a little proudly raised?

If these observations are true as applied to the nation at large, they will be found equally just in reference to any English family taken by chance from any situation in life, excepting, however, the very lowest of all,—a class which all my philanthropy cannot induce me willingly to contemplate closely, however I may pity its members. There will always be in this family a certain dignity of behaviour and conduct according with its position in life. Whether it be that of a farmer, of a manufacturer, of a tradesman, it matters not,—you will find there the most respectful deference in the sons towards their father. The eldest son will be treated by his young brothers with a certain re-

spect also. At the hour of dinner the father will dress himself neatly, his children will do the same, and the meal will pass with suitable decency and reserve. Surely here there is relative dignity, the more remarkable as being of daily occurrence.

My dear Augustus, for I like to continue my old habit of calling you *à l'Anglaise*, I am determined to restrict my observations to England, at least in as far as I am able, as I shall thus avoid all comparison with any other country, particularly with our own.

I here finish my two first letters, considering them as a sufficient introduction to what I have to say; and I shall now pass on to details, which, whilst I recall them to my memory, will amuse me a second time.

Yours ever: adieu!

LETTER III.

English Exclusiveness. — Aristocratic Circles.—Politeness towards Strangers.—The Opera.—The Dandy's Box.—The Crush-room.—Nocturnal Bustle.—Damaged Coach.

My dear Augustus,

In order to reside, and particularly to travel through England, it is necessary to be rich. This explains why few foreigners remain there. I do not speak of those persons whom business brings to London for a few weeks, and whose observations being necessarily restricted, can be of little worth.

It is a delicate and difficult thing to reach the high society—that of the exclusive aristocracy of England: it is, however, less so for a stranger than for an Englishman who by birth does not belong to this class;—the relations that I have in it opened the way to me. But

if it be difficult to get admitted, yet, when once presented and received, this very character of stranger attracts, if possible, still greater civility and politeness. The manner of the men is in general cold: here the profound bows of the Continent, between men especially, must be laid aside; they might pass for an avowed inferiority. I am far from recommending impertinence; but polite ease, sustained by a little apparent indifference, and readiness to repel any airs of pride, succeed not badly.

I repeat, when once admitted, it is impossible to meet with more courtesy, to receive more polite attention, to enjoy more luxury or more magnificence, than in the aristocratical circles of England. A few days only after my introduction, invitations poured upon me. With my opportunities, a man who had a rage for dancing might have gone to three or four balls and fêtes every evening; and a *gourmand* might daily have tasted of as many excellent dinners. As for me, circumstances and other pursuits soon took me away from this brilliant scene, in which I rarely afterwards appeared.

It has often happened to me on the day I was to dine out, particularly at the mansion of Lord H——, to see a carriage arrive at my door a few minutes before the hour appointed, on purpose to convey me to the house. The coachman always looked as if he had just come out of his dressing-room, and would not for the world have turned his head, which he held fixed and directed towards the ears of his superb horses. Two footmen six feet high, with long gold-headed canes, stood at the carriage-door. The same attention, offered me to return home, was more easy to decline.

Another mark of politeness generally adopted, and particularly towards strangers, is to send Opera tickets. Almost all the boxes in the King's theatre are let. The ladies who take them, and whose names and titles are placed on the door of each box, give two or three hundred pounds to have one during the season (about six months). The little ivory tablet you receive is tied with a ribbon, and enclosed in perfumed paper, with the addition of a few obliging words. This is a true

Aladdin's lamp; it not only opens the doors of the theatre, but those of the boxes of all your acquaintances, in which it is expected that every man of any pretension shall present himself at least for a few minutes to offer his compliments to the ladies, and salute their noble husbands.

If silence was better preserved; if the noise of the opening and shutting of doors, the incessant call of "Box-keeper!" (always in a loud voice and ascending key) did not throw a shade over the *ensemble*,—this Opera would be the perfection of taste, as it is of splendour and greatness. I ought, however, to add, that for some years past the noise has much diminished, and the English appear to know better how to enjoy and appreciate the foreign talents which the prodigious remuneration they give attracts to England. The orchestra particularly has improved in an astonishing manner, and, I do not hesitate to say, is now admirable.

You know how fond I am of music. My sojourn in Naples, where I received my first

impressions of that art, and at an age when emotions are so lively and so easily exerted, has perhaps disposed my nature to a stronger enjoyment of it. There is nothing I can compare to the sensation I felt in London when, quitting the rumbling noise of a rapid carriage, and the cries and confusion of the streets surrounding the Opera house, I found myself suddenly in that large and brilliant theatre, under the influence of the penetrating and majestic harmony of eighty musicians united! All that I can say, and what I am ashamed to tell, is, that tears filled my eyes.

When an opera is performed the night after the queen's drawing-room, all the ladies appear in their court head-dresses: then are the toilets still more brilliant than usual, and the waving and agitation of the feathers and brightness of the diamonds add greatly to the magnificence of the exhibition. When the orchestra begins the national air of "God save the King," three thousand people rise together and listen in a respectful—I had almost said, religious silence. It is impossible

to partake of such a sight without the liveliest emotion.

Since we are here at the Opera, I cannot resist my desire to speak to you of a certain box, deep and spacious, furnished with glasses and sofas, *une baignoire*, situated close to the stage. There you may judge, not of the orchestra—you are too near it, and it is too powerful; not of the admirable voice of Rubini, for he turns his back to the box, which is placed at ten feet within the range of the foot-lights;—but from this box you may judge of and admire the forms and grace of the *danseuses* in the ballet. It belongs to about a dozen of "fashionables" of all ages, and is called the *dandy's box*. During the opera it remains empty; but when the ballet begins, about eleven o'clock, (the time a "fashionable" rises from table on a day that Taglioni dances,) these gentlemen arrive, their minds fatigued and numbed, the consequence doubtless of an epicurean dinner, seasoned by some glasses of the choicest wines. They are, however, soon aroused; the appearance of a first-

rate pretty *danseuse* affects them in an electrical and wonderful manner. They pass suddenly from their state of elegant inertness into one of joy, then into one of admiration; from that into one of enthusiasm, which they express by a clapping of hands which rivals that of the public, whose attention it does not fail to attract. One object they have in view is thus gained; the second is, that their applauses do not escape the grateful ears of her for whom they are intended, and in the charming courtesy of thanks which she makes, a slight and graceful portion may be distinguished which is offered to her particular admirers.

Women as well as men are admitted into the pit. They must be full-dressed, but hats are not allowed—doubtless that the view of those who may be placed behind may not be intercepted. It is perfectly respectable for a lady to go into the pit, but I doubt if there exists a woman of *haut ton* who for any inducement would appear there. In general the dress of the men is neat, but the obligation of appearing there in silk stockings has

been done away with by degrees: this is one of those smaller results of a connexion with the Continent, which, under a thousand forms, have slid into every society in England, sometimes for evil, sometimes for good.

The exit from the Opera is a terrible assemblage of tumult, and confused and clamorous cries. On the great staircase, you hear voices screaming for the possessors of carriages. "The Marchioness of T——'s carriage stops the way!" "Lord D——'s carriage stops the way!" If it is a Russian's carriage, you hear "Prince Shrimplopsicoff's carriage," &c. The criers are not embarrassed to rid themselves of a name which sticks in their throat; and I confess they have often made me laugh heartily. During all this time the carriage-people wait in a room at the top of the staircase, where they are crammed to suffocation: but it is the fashion. There are certainly among the crowd some who have to walk home; but you may guess why they wait, and always to the last.

As for me, I always escaped under the

colonnade down-stairs to see the battle and to enjoy the bustle in all its glory. There you find a great number of men, chiefly Irishmen, who poke their lanterns between your legs to light you to a hackney-coach; for here is the region of hackney-coaches. Then it is, "Your lordship, please your honour, give me a shilling, your honour; it won't do you much harm, your honour, and it will do me much good, your lordship." And then the hundred voices screaming all together, and roaring for all the coachmen at once. These arrive in the same manner, all charging together upon the same door: and then it is, when the noise is at its height, that you may remark the address and coolness of the coachmen in livery, who find a means sooner or later to make their way through a hundred carriages, entangled in such confined spaces, that with an inch less of room it would be impossible for them to move without breaking each other's coach in pieces; —and yet I have rarely heard of any accident occurring. It is true, indeed, that one sometimes meets, in a morning, a carriage, drawn

slowly by one horse, going to the coachmaker, with a large hole in the panel right through the coat of arms or the coronet; the coachman, in his morning *négligé*, walking by its side like a father watching his wounded child. In his air you read that it was not his fault; but that yesterday, coming from the Opera, "a vagabond of a hackney-man," unable to hold his beasts, had given him a *coup de lance* with his vulgar pole.

Good night, my dear friend! Enough of the Opera for this evening: I am going to bed.

LETTER IV.

London in Winter.—A Fog.—London in Spring.—Hour of visiting.—London Squares.—Hyde Park.—The fashionable Drive.—Park Sketches.—A French Distingué.—Count D.—Lord P.—Kensington Gardens.—The Promenade.

It would be curious to hear two travellers talking about London, who might have visited it, the one during spring, the other during winter. Their first mutual exclamation of surprise would very surely be followed by a dispute. I hardly know how to describe this extraordinary difference. In winter, particularly on one of those dismal days when there is no wind, the whole of this vast town is covered with an immense cloud of fog, (rendered still thicker and darker by 300,000 chimneys that emit their coal smoke into the air,) which appears to envelope it with its immovable weight,

and prohibits all enjoyment of daylight to its inhabitants.

It is this cloud of fog also which, at the distance of twenty miles, proclaims to travellers, "This is London." On some days one cannot see distinctly within doors, and when, you look from the street through the windows into the interior of the houses, everything appears perfectly dark. Should you discover, close on the other side of the glass, a face which may be looking at you, it is exactly the resemblance of one of those bodies preserved in a bottle of spirits, being characterised by the same melancholy yellow colour. About two o'clock, lights have already appeared in the shops. There are some streets where they are obliged to have them during the whole day. These streets are dismal and damp, covered with a black liquid mud. There, only merchants, and attorneys' clerks are to be seen, who walk quickly along, dressed in black coats, black trousers, black waistcoats, black hats. The fog is all that time falling in a cold vapour which penetrates and

wets the clothes. Of the faces of those you meet, you see only the tip of a red nose, for large cravats cover the ears and mouth, and the hat is well pulled down upon the eyes. But this is a glorious time for the hackney-coaches, scarcely any other kind of carriage being seen.

You go home: the necessity of augmenting the fires, increases in your rooms the quantity of black dust and smoke arising from the coal; everything is full of it, everything smells of it, and you ought to change your linen two or three times a day, and have your hands constantly in soap and water, if you wish to be clean. In fact, it requires all the indefatigable care of the inhabitants of London to keep their houses even as clean as they are during this long and dull season of the year.

These are the causes, no doubt, which induce the noble and wealthy, and all who have places in the country, to quit London in the winter. They go to seek light and air. I stop here in the sombre side of my picture, and draw the curtain over the cold and dismal time of the year.

I would much rather show you London on a fine spring or summer day, then all brilliant in the light of the sun.

Have you ever walked on more beautiful pavement? Have you ever seen together such a number of equipages rivalling each other in the beauty of the horses and in the splendour of the liveries? These stop in scores at the entrances of those large and sumptuous magazines, in which are exhibited with such profusion, not only the admirable productions of the industry of the country, but those of the whole world! and in which the eager attention of the persons employed, even when the purchase is of the smallest value, is so attractive!

Come with me towards the Park; and let us go through those more tranquil streets, lined with more spacious houses, and now lighted by a clear sky. Within the handsome windows of plate glass we shall perceive baskets of flowers; whilst, without, long boxes of mignonette perfume the air which the passers-by inhale. Here, again, are many of those equipages stopping oc-

casionally at the different doors: the footman's *roll* with the knocker astonishes you, but it is *fashionable;* the three less rapid blows which terminate it, are applied with a redoubled force, which make you fear for the safety of the door, especially if it happen to be the carriage of a duchess which has just driven up. This is the hour of visiting. Take a glance into the vestibule which the first open door discovers: a powdered butler, and several other servants, also powdered and in rich liveries, stand respectfully ranged to let the elegant visitor pass; she, in two or three light steps, has bounded from the carriage over the pavement, her foot appearing to shrink at the necessity of coming in contact with the vulgar stones. We shall see this scene renewed constantly, (under slight shades of difference,) in all the streets inhabited by the wealthy in London.

You see at the end of that street, which is in a right line, (as are all the streets in the west-end of London,) some trees whose green foliage contrasts agreeably with the brown and monotonous hue of the houses. Grosvenor

Square is before us; and as this place is in our way towards the Park, let us pass through it, to judge how salutary and valuable it must be to the population of so large a town to possess many similar spaces where the air freely circulates. In the centre is a garden surrounded by a railing: remark the walks, the shrubs, the flowers, the grass; how well it is all arranged and kept! Each house which composes the square is obliged to contribute to the expense of the garden, and each family has the enjoyment of it.

There are, I believe, twenty or thirty squares in London, one taking precedence of the other, (for here also there are ranks,) according to the quarter where they are situated, and the class of people who inhabit them. Those of the first rank are St. James's and Grosvenor; they owe their estimation doubtless to their being occupied by the high aristocrcay. The size of the square, and of the houses which surround it, and the beauty of the garden, are uninfluential in determining the preference. If you should have a visit to pay, or, still better, if you have *the*

honour of being invited to dine in one of these squares, you are sure, in getting into your carriage, to hear your servant repeat the direction in a peculiarly loud voice to the coachman, in order (you would suppose) that all who may be passing may hear it. The coachman himself, lifting up his head and his elbows still higher, assumes an air of importance and satisfaction which the horses are also *made* to feel! Even to this point is carried the impression and influence of aristocracy in England!

But here we are in "the Park," meaning Hyde Park; for when you speak of either of the others, you must specify the name,—Regent's Park, St. James's Park. That in which we now are, is the general *rendezvous* of those who go in carriages, on horseback, or on foot. In seeing so spacious and extensive a piece of ground, closed in the distance by large and beautiful trees, surrounded by a principal gravel road, which seems to lose itself among them, you are surprised to find that a promenade so attractive is neglected; and that the crowd of carriages, horsemen, and walkers, confine them-

selves to the only side of the Park which is bordered by a street, separated, it is true, from it by an iron railing. The carriages drive up and down this road one after the other, in two, and sometimes three rows, and among them the horsemen walk, trot, and gallop; on the other side of the road are the pedestrians, almost all of whom have their heads turned towards the carriages: this occasions many a droll *shock* between those walking in contrary directions, which shocks are rendered still more amusing (when there is no lady in the case) by each person tranquilly continuing his route without even the apologies and bows which in any other place would ensue; they hardly seem to be sensible of what has taken place, and the head immediately resumes its former observing position.

But here, my dear Augustus, you should have a friend belonging to the country,—a person well acquainted with *this* world, who, with his arm linked in yours, regarding, *en passant*, certain physiognomies in the carriages or on horseback, will recount their histories in your ear; for, like all communities, London has its scandals; and

the praises (certainly well merited) which are bestowed on the morality of the general society in England, cannot in strict justice be applied without exception to the most elevated, where, as in other great capitals, there exist certain countesses, marchionesses, and even duchesses *too celebrated* for such praise. But, at the risk of being called by you too discreet, I will quit this subject, to make such remarks as will better become me.

Do you see that tilbury, at the end of the drive, standing close under the statue of Achilles, which was erected in honour of and dedicated to the talents and military success of a Duke, by the English ladies, and whose too succinct clothing caused at the time of its erection so many clever caricatures and pleasant jokes. This tilbury is, as you see, surrounded by beaux on horseback, smiling and chatting. You may be certain that the two persons in it, (the one, a man still young—the other, a pretty woman)—are people of fashion. The former is probably the son of some noble earl or baron, perhaps an honourable and gallant colonel; (gallant, here,

signifies brave as well as that other signification which it has elsewhere;) he is at last married. I say, you may be certain they are people of fashion; because twenty other gigs of different sorts might stop there without attracting a single soul to look at or greet their occupants.

Another sort of good style is for a cavalier to stop near the low barrier which protects the foot-passengers, and there to let the reins fall over his horse's neck, who, on his part, complaisantly stretches his head across the rail to be caressed by a small gloved hand; she to whom this hand belongs, has the other passed through the arm of her mother or sister (in the latter case, the head of that sister is turned away with an air of indifference): they are talking with *nonchalance* of the ball at the Duke of D.'s, where there were cherries at a guinea a pound; or of the breakfast for to-morrow, which will be delightful,—James Smith has promised to sing! You hear inquiries made amongst the crowd, "Who is that young man?—he with the half-grown moustaches, whose horse Miss B. is patting?" "He is in the Blues," is the reply:

the name is nothing; "He is in the Blues," is enough.

See, here is a group of gentlemen on horseback, all standing still with their horses' heads turned to a common centre, the cane in the air, the end supported on the hip. They are discussing the immensely long speech which the representative of a certain city in Ireland made last night, and which kept them so late from dinner; these are no longer very young, their time of youthful vanity is passed, at present it is that of politics and epicurism.

Now turn, and look at that green carriage, without arms, and the servants out of livery; but, nevertheless, the whole in good taste. It goes slowly: a certain individual on horseback at the door leans his hand on it, and puts his head almost into the very interior; doubtless, to hear what that pale and delicate-looking woman (who appears to be speaking with anxiety and reproach, and who shrinks back as if to avoid notice) is saying. What does not please me in the gentleman is, that he appears to *like* to be thus seen; you will perhaps see him again

to-night in the *dandy's box*. As to all those cabriolets, in which are young men with moustaches, (although I do not think they are all or any of them in the army,) each with a lady by his side, very much dressed, and of a certain equivocal appearance, I confess that I think this is not calculated to embellish the scene.

But here is one of our own countrymen; you know him, I suppose: he is on the dark bay horse, his hat rather low on his eyes, to show, we are to imagine, those few scattered hairs behind. He has certainly rather increased *in embonpoint* during the sixty years that he has been going about the world; yet you would not take him for more than fifty. He is a man *comme il faut*, both by birth and habits, and still has pretensions, as you may perceive by his cheeks, so well sustained by that high, stiffly-starched cravat; and he has made himself somewhat feared by his caustic observations and biting raillery. He has always frequented a portion of the *high* society of Paris and London (this does not always imply the *best*); and has

habitually expended forty or fifty thousand francs a year, without its being known that he ever had any fortune. He is a friend of Prince T. (he who, after having triumphed over nearly a whole century, yet knows how to jest and possess all the pristine strength and freshness of his mind, and—but I do not talk politics). To return to our countryman on the dark bay horse: he still loves the world and its pleasures; particularly that of a good table, which his iron health permits him to enjoy with impunity. It was he who said to me once, on his return from England, where I had met him, to Paris, "Ah! my dear fellow, it is quite another planet!"

But look! here comes *la fleur des pois!* See, he arrives in his tilbury; at his side, a little groom just two feet high (his tiger); this is another of our countrymen; but now an amiable renegade, for he has become a naturalised Englishman. It is the handsome A——d (le Comte de D.), with his cravat so prodigiously well put on, his blooming cheeks, his black whiskers, his hair curling, *naturally* of course.

He has married a young and very pretty person, whose rather celebrated mother-in-law is still handsomer than herself, and who is one of the most agreeable and clever women of her day; thus, in all respects, he has been most lucky. And, besides all this, he is himself the very *apogeum* of elegance, the despair of a number of beaux who cannot, alas! put on a cravat like that! He is likewise a man of talent, and possesses a good figure and *tournure*, as you see; and, to crown all these qualities which form the man of the world, he has acquired the glory, in a country where certain individuals carry the extravagance of the toilet to such an excess, of leaving them all behind.

Speaking of him, recalls to my mind a rather comical meeting that I witnessed some years back in this very Park, and which will give you a notion of the manners of a man of rank and high fashion. D. had just made his first appearance in London: he had arrived, *soit dit en passant*, under the auspices of his brother-in-law, who had formerly held the rank of captain in the English service, and was then returned a

duke and general of the Restoration—that is to say, a high and puissant seigneur. I was in the Park on foot; Lord P. who was in his cabriolet, had drawn up to speak to me; it was late,—almost every one had left the Park, and the being thus alone had thrown a degree of the confidential into our conversation, which perhaps rendered any interruption not so agreeable,—when, all at once, arrived le Comte de D. at full gallop, joyful, and quite out of breath with emotion and pleasure in finding himself in a scene so new to him; and, no doubt, anxious to make the acquaintance of all the fashionables who might fall in his way. On seeing me, he stopped to speak; and, in less than half a minute, was in a lively conversation (entirely on his own side,) with Lord P. who replied to all his compliments on the beauty of his horse and cabriolet, upon the length of that beautiful tail which nearly touched the ground, &c. by very amiable smiles and repeated bows, and by that peculiar laugh, (*ricanement*, peculiar, I might say, to his family,) so impossible to

describe, and which must be heard, or seen rather, before you can comprehend all that it expresses; a laugh, in fact, which imitates conversation, without one word having been said. Lord P. not understanding French, did not comprehend a single word of all that D. was pouring forth; and I, as you may believe, took good care not to undeceive him. I was far too well amused; besides, I had no doubt that the parties were acquainted, for the courtesy of Lord P. was marked, and D. addressed him as "my lord" in speaking to him; therefore I was not a little surprised and diverted when, on D.'s quitting us, Lord P. said in a tone difficult to imitate, "Who is that?"

I have kept you so long a time in this Park, that I will spare you the others; reserving to myself, however, a few words on Kensington Gardens, which adjoin Hyde Park. These are royal property; the palace is inhabited by the Duchess of Kent, and her daughter, the Princess Victoria (heiress presumptive to the crown): the public are not admitted in carriages; the Duke of St. Albans is, I believe, the

only subject (excepting perhaps the members of the Royal Family) who has the right of entering in a carriage. This is, I am told, one of the ancient privileges attached to the title of Grand Falconer to the King, which the ancestors of the duke possessed, and which is transmitted by hereditary succession. What is most remarkable in these gardens is, the size and majesty of the trees, as well as the shade which they spread over the beautiful alleys, formed mostly in right lines, in the ancient style, and *en laisser courre*, (as our ancestors used to say.) This is particularly striking at sunset, which is just the time in the season that the gay world has chosen for the promenade, to the martial sound of the band of the King's Guards. It is also the hour when the citizens and the commonalty retire to dinner and to tea, which does not a little tend to purify the *coup d'œil.*

The *allée* chosen for the walk is the one close to the Park; but here, at least, there is apparently good reason for the choice: the horsemen, whose entrance is forbidden, can ap-

proach the very edge of the ha-ha and railing which separate the Park from the gardens, and thus enjoy the view of this very fashionable promenade, in which the variety of colours, so much liked by the English ladies, comes out so well from the green sward, and the still darker shade of those fine trees. You may judge by the little friendly nods and bows which are exchanged from one side to the other, that the whole forms but one society and that more or less all are acquainted.

Sur ce, mon cher, je prie Dieu qu'il vous ait en sa sainte et digne garde.

LETTER V.

A Foreigner's Impressions.—Early Associations.—Quietness.—Fair Play. Treatment of Animals.—English Stage-coach.—The Coachman. — Travelling Companions. — Changing Horses.—Return to London.

DURING my sojourn in England, I often regretted not having by my side one of those Continental unbelievers who can only admire their own country because they have not seen any other! But it was more particularly a *friend* that I wished for, (which was a proof to me that the impressions I received were not imaginary,)—it was a companion I desired, with whom my pleasure would have been redoubled in observing together so many new objects, so many different manners, and customs, and habits. And then to say, that it is only the distance of seven leagues of water which

appears to effect such a change! Upon the Continent, from whatever point you depart, you may traverse four hundred leagues and find an almost constant resemblance in general appearance, morals, and manners; there, even different languages appear to become amalgamated; for on the frontiers of the different countries a *patois* exists which resembles both languages. Is it possible to resolve this problem by the supposition that it is this watery barrier which interrupts the correspondence and similitude arising from the habits of immediate approximation?

I recur to the expression of our countryman, the friend of Prince T.— "*L'Angleterre est tout-à-fait une autre planète!*" for such, I think, will always be the impression produced on the mind of every impartial and unprejudiced man. I am far from seeking to prove that everything is superior in England,—that there is absolutely nothing in other countries to be preferred; far from it. I do not even wish to establish a comparison: I am only desirous to impart to you the opinions I form of the country whilst

I am in it; and, if possible, to disengage myself from the recollections which, having been personal, might influence me in what I have to say,—for might one not easily fall into error in judging of a country in which the early affections of childhood had not been first implanted? Their remembrance may render the places where they were first felt, superior to any that might afterwards be seen; whilst to those uninterested in them, they in their turn might prove insignificant. Could you judge with impartiality of the beauty of the women in a country new to you, if you had but recently left her you love in another? In my estimation, I never witnessed a scene so admirable as the plain where I received the recompense in front of my regiment, of which I have already boasted in my first letter; and yet it was only a field of corn trodden down by horses' feet, a farm and some huts still burning! If you accuse me of vanity for mentioning this unimportant subject a second time, I will reply that I have only done so because it appeared to me to elucidate my idea, —namely, that the impressions of the mind may

influence the opinions, and even mislead us in our manner of seeing and judging.

What must always strike a stranger who has just arrived in England is, that everything appears to be done, without confusion, without noise, without cries or loss of time in useless words: even when the common people are disputing, it is rarely that you hear them all talking together, however warm their discussions may be; in the ordinary routine of life such a thing never occurs. Another fact to remark is, that whenever a man is thrown down in fighting, his fall will prove an immediate safeguard and protection A man who should strike his fallen adversary, would call down upon himself the indignation of all the spectators, even were they of the very lowest class; the very children would hear the cry of "Shame! shame!" resound in their ears if they were to forget in their battles this general law. Without desiring to make any particular allusion, I have seen elsewhere cowardly and cruel blows given without any mercy to a fallen foe, simply because

he was then without the means of defence. A sudden attack commenced without notice being given, would not pass unpunished by the English people. Have I dreamed all this? and, if not, am I wrong in thinking that such a trait merits notice?

A law exists in England to prevent and punish cruelty to animals,—horses particularly, which, from their number and importance, demand the greatest care. A conviction of former cruelties doubtless caused this law to be enacted; and it is also true that Mr. Martin, the proposer of it to parliament, was at first exposed to all sorts of mockery, and was even caricatured. But the law passed, and its results are manifest. Whether it be from conviction of its utility, or from pure generosity, animals are here not only treated with kindness and particular care, but there are some even to whose share (if I dare so express myself) is added a larger portion of ease and enjoyment than that allotted to them by their Creator. In other countries, you have, like me, perhaps seen certain *voituriers*, or postilions of dili-

gences, whose long and heavily-thonged whip has cruelly sought the same spot at each blow, in order to remove the skin, the perpetrators saying, with a savage laugh, "That is the only way to make the brute go." In another large city, nevertheless celebrated for taste, elegance, arts, and talents of every description, you will meet, in winter, a carman, urging onwards his miserable, overloaded horse, who is still full of courage, but whose iron-bound feet have no hold on the iced pavement, and who at last falls half crushed under the weight of the cart,—you will see, I say, this man take his whip by the smallest part with his two hands, and furiously strike his victim with the butt-end over his eyes, mouth, and nose, until the blood flows! and this accompanied with frightful and blasphemous oaths! The indignation of the observers is, no doubt, at its height; but how, unless they use their own personal strength, redoubled by indignation, can they prevent it? Shall I add, that lately, in travelling on the Continent, I saw the postilion, after having harnessed the horse on which he was to ride, return and tighten the

saddle with such force and violence, that, when I asked him the reason, he replied that the beast was badly wounded in the withers, and that it was to prevent the saddle from moving, and thus augmenting the wound. Unable to believe what I heard, I leapt from the carriage, and, ordering him to take off the saddle, found indeed that the poor animal had a sore of some inches in length and breadth. To my remonstrances the brute of a postilion quietly remarked, "There is no other, he must go." It is unnecessary to say, that I refused to take the poor animal, and that another was borrowed from a neighbouring farm to replace him: I wrote my complaint to the postmaster (whom I had asked for in vain); but, as I quitted the country, I know not if justice was done.

Such pictures can but serve to set forth the wisdom and philanthropy of the law established in England, and to create a regret that it is not put in force everywhere. I confess that, for some days after the above scene, I had this poor horse and his horrible wound constantly before my eyes; and as it is very proba-

ble that, in like circumstances, there are many who would have suffered the same painful sensations that I did, it is obvious that a law similar to that which is enforced in England would be highly beneficial on the Continent, not only to the poor suffering animal, but to us who are exposed to the contemplation of its sufferings.

To help to drive away these unpleasant images from your mind, can I resist asking you to go a few miles with me on the roof of a stage-coach on one of the roads in England? I shall place you there, and take myself my favourite seat on the coach-box, next the coachman. Here he comes, with his face crimsoned with health and continual exposure to the open air; his boots are well blacked, his linen is clean, his hat is brushed, his whole appearance *cossu* and decent; he puts on his gloves, whilst he is giving his directions to the stable-men, who have harnessed his four horses in the space of three minutes, and those harnesses are shiningly clean; he is still standing up arranging his reins, and with a last glance he assures himself

that "all is right." Now he is mounted and seated; he has saluted us with "Good morning, gentlemen." At the sound of a slight shrill whistle, which issues from his lips without their seeming to move, the carriage is borne off without effort; all moves spontaneously together, as if it was one piece. Look at that long and light whip, which, although redoubtable in his hand, will yet very rarely be used, and then more to correct too great ardour, or carelessness, than idleness; on the contrary, look how he gently draws the lash across and across his poor horses, calling each by his name. This is doubtless to let them know that he is there; he even finds the means of caressing and playing with the two nearest to him, by tapping them gently with the end of his whip; you will see how carefully and attentively he will avoid all danger during the whole route. His first and most important thought is, that the lives of ten or twelve persons depend on him. We travel with rapidity: but this advantage is not purchased by cruelty, or oaths; and far from being a pain, it is on the contrary a pleasure to see these fine horses, full

of fire and with their heads raised, seeming, in a manner, to devour their work. Here, again, you recognise the spirit of order and regularity; each carriage on meeting takes the left, and each respectively keeps this side of the road: thus, heavy carriages or waggons always leave an empty space for those who, travelling quicker, have to pass them.

If you remark well your travelling companions on the outside of the coach, you may pretty nearly guess by their appearance to what class they belong. Gentlemen, and even lords, think it no derogation to travel in this manner; but, in general, passengers on the roof of a stage-coach are professional or commercial men, farmers, and shop-keepers, whose behaviour is almost always proper and decent. It would be curious and interesting to keep an account of all the different information which you may collect in seizing opportunities of talking with them. Whether it be on the various branches of industry which they themselves follow, or on other subjects connected with them, you will always find the same good-will in satisfying your

inquiries; and the manner in which they express themselves, and the clearness of their ideas, as well as the knowledge they exhibit, are remarkable,—persons much less ignorant than myself might derive instruction from them.

Frequently, in our progress, we meet a stage-coach, sometimes even two or three, all, like ours, loaded with people; all in excellent order, and all of the same make and appearance, even in coachmen and cattle. We have just changed horses, you see with what promptitude; from some distance we discerned the fresh team already prepared, and waiting our arrival on the side of the road, in order that not a moment might be lost. This arrival is so regular that a delay of ten minutes is quite an event in the place where the stage is expected. It must be added, to the honour of the coachmen, that their moral conduct and probity are put to the proof daily; children, and even young girls, are confided to their care, with the certain conviction that they will be carefully attended to and protected: I have often and often been a spectator of what I assert, and have inwardly applauded

the care and attention, which were rendered still more apparent by the simplicity and frankness which accompanied them.

I shall stop you here in this short journey.—We must let our stage-coach continue its rapid course; we will return to London by another (plenty of them are passing every hour); and then you must listen to some more of my observations on its inhabitants and society; and, after that, we shall set out on our tour through a small portion of the interior of the country.

Adieu, then, once more.

LETTER VI.

Censure.— National Coldness.—Newspaper Details.— English Vanity.— Shyness.— Jeux Folâtres.—Want of Gaiety.— Parties of Pleasure.— Cockney Pic-nic.— English reserve.— Reception of Foreigners.—Continental Soirées.—An English Drawing-room.—English Husband and Wife.

I DO not know why, but to-day I feel inclined to censure, even to be severe; but having the habit of saying or writing what I think at the very moment, I will not stop my correspondence with you on account of this fit of ill-humour or misanthropy, which has just seized me: when, however I shall have returned to my usual state of mind, I will re-peruse my letter, and, should I find it unjust, I will spare you the trouble of reading it.

If, in order to attain pleasure and really to enjoy it, it was only necessary to make continual sacrifices of time and money, then the English would be the gayest people in the

world — the people who best know how to amuse themselves. The persons in different classes who thus run after pleasure is indeed innumerable in England; it is like a determination, a continual desire, a real *entêtement.* Let it cost what it may, gaiety must be had: but, through all these efforts, the coldness and reflectiveness of the national character always pierce; and one might almost suspect that this undeviating constancy only arises from the impossibility of ever attaining the desired end. In the highest, as well as in the least distinguished society, I have always received the same impression: there exists always in every *réunion* a restraint, an indifference too marked (particularly towards those who do not form the same *clique,* and in that case it goes so far as to become rudeness); there is a want of general ease and of general amiability, and this only becomes the more apparent from one's seeing all the trouble which has been taken that every one should be gay, very gay, and very much amused, which, alas! happens but rarely, not to say never.

One might add, on the subject of the fashionable circles, that the principal thing is not precisely to enjoy personally, but to have it believed that you do so; that everybody should know or think you do so, this is the important thing. There is not a brilliant party in London, or at one of the magnificent country seats, or at the mansion of a man of fashion, which is not immediately detailed in the newspapers; even the great dinners are described. After a royal drawing-room, the name and toilet of each lady who appeared is mentioned, one after another,—ribbons, laces, feathers, diamonds, pearls, even to the kind of silk or satin of which the dress was composed, how it was trimmed, with the technical and scientific expressions in French of the Parisian *marchandes de modes*; all is printed in the papers, and sometimes fills two or three of their enormous pages: if the occasion be a fancy or masked ball (where no masks are worn), then the dress of the gentlemen shares the same publicity, even to the form and colour of their inexpressibles; every-

thing being thus exhibited to the face of day, placed under the public eye, and detailed to attract the attention of the millions,—even of those who, banished to the Indies, receive and devour the English papers. There must exist then, I think, more vanity and show, prepared for public effect, than for the pleasure of the moment; besides, it is absolutely *de rigueur* in the supreme *bon-ton* to have an air of indolence, satiety, and nonchalance, which implies that all this is not enough, that show and magnificence are so habitual that they are become quite fatiguing.

I must tell you, that for some years they have adopted in England *dejeuners à la fourchette*, and pic-nics in the country (always spoken or written in French); this leads of course to *jeux folâtres dans les bosquets ou sur le gazon*, and it is in these exhibitions that the men remain particularly in the back-ground. These games in the country demand a forgetfulness of etiquette and formality; they require an ease of manners, a *sans façon* which should always be polite, a childishness which may

still be spiritual; in truth, frank, natural gaiety, is the main-spring of this sort of pleasure: but, my dear Augustus, all this is wanting; you may seek it in vain. Is it reserve, or rather shyness? The men especially— (this last word repeated will make you think that not daring to attack the English ladies face to face, I content myself with a negative accusation *en passant*)—the men then appear, on these occasions, entirely out of their element; and if one of them, bolder than the others, ventures to put himself forward, his conscience probably reproaches him immediately for his fruitless endeavour,—(he has in that the advantage over the Ass of La Fontaine,) —and, to avoid becoming completely ridiculous, he quickly retires into his usual habits. Besides, there exists in these parties, *called* of pleasure, neither *ensemble* nor *entrainement;* they are composed of many separate efforts after gaiety, which lead to very little in the end. See, the master of the villa comes towards you, on the charming lawn where the company is dispersed; he would willingly animate them a

little; he says, "My dear count, come quickly into the *salon*, and sing your pretty Neapolitan airs to the piano."—"I, my dear friend, sing before all these people! Before any but my friends! I never do so." "What do you say? it is the Duchess of C., it is Lady T., and Lady D., one of your countrywomen, who wish it; they asked for it even, you cannot refuse."—"I am *desolé* not to be able to do what you are so kind as to ask; but neither my Neapolitan airs nor myself deserve so much honour, therefore pray excuse me." And you escape, not forgetting to remark to yourself how far the influence of name and rank is carried.

Let us continue then upon the grassy carpet, looking at these *jeux folâtres*. You see the handsome Lady C. S. who is in a graceful attitude as trying a new game just imported from Paris; she is armed with two little sticks, with which she throws a light hoop, which is to be caught and returned in the same manner by B. the clever author: he has by birth (here so essential), as well as by his talents,

the *entrée* to all these fashionable parties, and doubtless there he studies and seizes the character of his countrymen, which he has so well depicted; but he also,—I ask his pardon,—is an Englishman in the game in which he is so agreeably occupied.

You see all these people here assembled in groups of two, three, or four persons; thus, also, the breakfast has passed; and I repeat, there is no *ensemble*, no unanimity in their wish to enjoy themselves, nothing inspiring: to be sure, you hear occasionally a laugh, but it comes from a *partie quarrée*, where perhaps something ridiculous has been seen or invented about an individual of the neighbouring group. The whole is certainly rich, full of elegant assiduity; but "*la gaieté*," who for one moment had hovered over our heads, attracted by the wishes and the brilliancy of those assembled, has already taken her flight to other climes: ask all those who, fatigued, are getting into their carriages, quitting this fête to go in search of new ones.

And yet what was there wanting that luxury and expense had not collected? No-

thing, absolutely nothing: even the weather was fine, the sun shone in all its brightness; the garden so full of flowers, the lawn so smooth and green, where we vainly laboured to be amused and to be gay, descended slopingly to the Thames, upon which steam-boats were passing and repassing, with their flags displayed, full of people, who, without being fashionable were perhaps more amused; they were going to Richmond (they also on parties of pleasure), and the music heard from these boats seemed to utter a challenge to the picnic as they passed away; and we people of *haut-ton*, it was much if we deigned to let fall a glance upon them whilst passing: a steam-boat! it is so common a sight in England; and the people on its deck, so vulgar! *fi-donc!*

The consequence of the publicity given to the diversions of the great world, amongst many others, is, that all classes, according to their ways and means, wish to taste of these enchanting pleasures; the country towns, the watering-places particularly, also possess their newspapers, which publish their gaieties and

fêtes. In London, the little as well as the great, the citizens as well as the exclusives, everybody has his ball, his fête, and his grand dinner; and you will find in the newspapers the quantity of poultry, game, venison, hams, beef, and mutton which were devoured. Even Mrs. Hog of Blackwall must try a *dejeuner à la fourchette*, or pic-nic, with Miss Horsemonger and her younger sister, Miss Eliza, with Mr. John Turtle and Mr. William Puddle, who are to come for them on Sunday, in a glass-coach, to go to Greenwich or Richmond Park, there to spread the rural repast on the fresh grass: it is most certainly a pic-nic, for Mr. John will bring some bottles of British wine,—made from gooseberries or currants,—and Mr. William has promised to bring a cold veal-pie, Miss Horsemonger a fruit-tart, and Mrs. Hog herself is to provide the substantial part of the breakfast. After all, if there exist a little real pleasure or enjoyment in those things, it is in my mind rather at the pic-nic of Mrs. Hog, than elsewhere.

In less crowded parties, even in intimacy,

which never exists amongst the English without a certain reserve, the men bring their usual coldness: their consciousness of not knowing how to amuse themselves or others, appears to take refuge, and conceal itself, under an air of contempt for the talents of society which they do not possess, and of which they try to avenge themselves in persisting to consider them as trivial. Do not forget, my dear Augustus, that my observations are general, and that I do not by any means intend to assert that there are not men in England greatly distinguished by elegance, grace, talent, and all which nature and a fine education know so well how to unite. I only criticise *in the lump;* and, as my satirical humour is not yet gone, let me return to my general observations, only I am now going to change my victims for a moment.

It is said that foreigners are received very favourably in England, and particularly so by the ladies; who, they say, are eager to have them at their parties, and to appear amiable in their eyes. There may be some truth in this; but also it must be considered under two

different points of view. As to the hospitality and even distinction with which they are treated,— I mean those who merit such treatment,— it is universal, and very flattering; but as for particular distinction accorded by the ladies, which certainly would be much more precious, there have been more foreigners than one who have very willingly taken such compliments entirely to themselves, and to their own merits, when, if they had judged the matter with a little less love for dear self, they could have only recognised in this preference, (a passing one, after all,) a desire, very natural in a state of society so monotonous, to be acquainted with something novel in habits and manners; also a wish to be in the fashion, whose despotism has, with great good policy, discovered that a few strangers scattered throughout a drawing-room could only tend to introduce a little of the animation so much wanted. So, if the king of the savages, during his visit to George the Fourth, had only been a little cleaner, he also would have been received, and, I doubt not, have gained as many suffrages. Those who are in the secret of the success

of the Persian ambassador with his long beard, might testify to what I advance: besides, these ladies find in the presence of foreigners an advantage which I am going to explain to you; first, declaring that in this I see rather a reproach against their own countrymen, than a direct compliment to foreigners. The manner in which a man of the world, arriving from the Continent, puts himself at his ease, and not only himself but those he may have to address, let their rank be what it may, is so different from the general habits of the English, that every one must be struck with it, more particularly the women, who, here as everywhere, only want the power, the opportunity rather, to display their wit, amiability, and perhaps even a little coquetry; and *certes* that will not be found in society purely English, where they are all ranged in seats, in a row on one side of the apartment, whilst the men all remain on the other, looking at them, or perhaps turning their backs and talking amongst each other of hunting, shooting, and politics. Surely it is not here that coquetry can be indulged, for there is here no opportunity.

You know as well as I do, that on the other side of the channel it is quite the contrary : there, without formal invitation, you go of an evening to "*faire votre cour aux dames ;*" you have only to ask at the door if Madame de —— is at home ? A " Yes, sir," from the porter shows you that you are on the list of the chosen few whom she kindly receives without ceremony as friends. You find about a dozen people favoured like yourself; there is no separation, no cutting off. Two or three ladies are gathered round the piano, listening to a young man who has seated himself almost without being asked ; he does not even look at the instrument upon which he accompanies himself, but, quite at his ease, his eyes turned to his auditors, he smilingly continues his song. Others are seated round a table, chatting, working, and drawing flowers or caricatures ; the feet are all collected under the table, the elbows even sometimes touch without any great harm being found in it. A flower may perhaps be spoiled, or a caricature not well hit off, because he who is trying to do it is possibly thinking of something else.

Upon the sofa, near the chimney, between two intimate friends, is seated probably the mistress of the house; a gentleman on his knees on a stool before them is telling the news; another behind, leaning over the back of the sofa, is talking of them and himself. Opposite, negligently reclining in a large arm-chair, is a young and pretty woman; she holds a pamphlet in her hand, which she does not read; she listens to two beaux who dispute the happiness of pleasing her, neither, however, doubting his success, until a third arrives, for whom the pamphlet is immediately laid aside. During an evening, you go in this manner into several families, and find always much the same; hundreds of people are, like yourself, thus paying their visits in hundreds of different houses.

From this slight sketch it is easy to imagine that a man who has passed a great part of his life in this manner, and who has acquired these habits, must feel himself in a new sphere when he enters an English drawing-room, where, permit me to say, he produces some-

what the effect of a curious wild beast,—animals much valued by the English. Remember always, Augustus, that I specify no particular society, and that there are many and brilliant exceptions; but, as you know, exceptions strengthen the rule.

To return to the mutual surprise alluded to above: it is certain one gets accustomed to the sight of a new animal, so the acquaintance of this one is quickly made; and you know, too, that the door once open, the foreigner is soon in the salon, and as quickly established on the sofa. He takes care not to join the men in talking politics, or in discussing the subjects of hunting and shooting. His education has strongly impressed on his mind that the hour of the drawing-room is that consecrated to the ladies; he recollects that in his country they have great influence over the situation of a man in the world, that they are either generous friends or implacable enemies. All this is surely sufficient to form a devoted, humble servant, a wholesale admirer of the fair sex; and it is in these invaluable qualities, which the English

ladies know so well how to appreciate, that he finds the advantage which I promised to explain to you. Whilst the husband is at his club eating a dinner which lasts more than three hours, then going to the ballet at the Opera, and after, God knows where, his wife is obliged to shut her doors against visiters, and to take, by way of diverting herself, a cup of tea *tête-à-tête* with the arm-chair of that very husband. Under these circumstances, her complaisance to foreigners, who will not fail to tell her that this custom is a crying barbarism, is neither surprising nor blameable.

Adieu ! dear Augustus, you think, I hope, that after such a long tirade my ill-humour has passed away.

LETTER VII.

Grandeur of London.—English Dinners.—An august Visiter.—Lawyers' Dinners.—Scotch Dinner.—Drinking Healths.—A general's Speech.—Courage and Timidity.

How shall I give you a just idea of the grandeur and immensity of London, which ought not to be called a town, but a province covered with houses; where one has apparently changed post-horses once before having quitted it, and its million and a half of inhabitants; of its innumerable quantity of carriages of every sort and kind, which are for ever arriving, traversing, and leaving it in every direction: of the imposing beauty of the Thames, whose waters are covered for some distance by a quadruple row of vessels, arriving from every part of the world or preparing to return! Is there not grandeur in the simple fact, that each house

(and who could ever count them!) is amply supplied with water, furnished by thousands of pipes which pass and repass at the depth of thirty feet under their foundations; that the greatest part of the town is hollowed by large subterranean aqueducts which the Thames, swelled by the tide, freshens and keeps clean; and that during the summer its hundreds of macadamised streets are constantly watered, as well as the roads round it for the distance of ten miles.

Can I make you comprehend the riches of the immense depôts, the numerous magazines, which its ports and celebrated docks contain! Can I paint the beauty and grandeur of the bridges which span this majestic river, as well as the view which offers itself to your eye in crossing them! the effect of the hundreds of ships, of steeples, and towers, which on all sides elevate their heads high in the air; and which, notwithstanding their elevation, are all surpassed and lorded over by the imposing attitude of St. Paul's, whose brilliant gilded cross seems as if it wished to touch the clouds

and place itself far above the reach of man! But, my dear Augustus, I will leave this to better painters than myself; it is too far beyond me, and the idea turns me giddy: so I will return to my remarks on society.

I might almost say I have dined with every class in England. Lord Chesterfield reminds his son, in one of his letters, that it is at table particularly that the gentleman is to be recognised; but may I not apply this very just observation in a more general manner? and add, that the dinners or repasts of the different classes of society are so many trials where their habits and characters are peculiarly displayed?

I have dined in the City of London with a merchant, perhaps one of the least considerable; and the day after I dined with Lord H. in St James's, where, during dessert, a servant announced an august person (since elevated to a rank so high that he can rise no more). He came *sans façon* to drink a glass of claret with his old friend; he deigned to show an interest in the recital of our few campaigns, and inquired about our manœuvres

of cavalry, particularly as to those employed by Napoleon to attack and carry the squares of infantry. I sketched them on the table, forming my squadrons with the dessert knives, whose silver handles (I told him) represented our brave huzzars. His attachment to his own country always appeared in his conversation when England was mentioned; and I think I owed some gracious smiles to the little hesitation with which,—in speaking before him of the commerce of the nation,—I said, that the previous day, after having passed the morning in visiting the quays and docks, I had dined with a friend in the City, who had been showing them to me. This avowal produced a considerable elongation in the faces of two lords, a dandy and a duke, who were present, and who heard me with astonishment: but it did not alter that of my kind relation Lord H.; and his Royal Highness, on the contrary, I am sure, liked me the better for it, for he visibly heard it with pleasure.

I have dined in company with thirty lawyers in their gowns and wigs! The table, arranged

for the meal, was placed in a Gothic vaulted hall, on an elevation to which you ascended by three steps: it is true that during the dinner we had to listen to two Latin songs, of which one began by "Non Nobis, Domine;" but, if there was no great pleasure or amusement in this, I found some interest in joining in a meeting which I knew had been kept up every year for ages back; and also in taking, as do all the guests, a few mouthfuls of beer out of a large silver vase, which had served this purpose from time immemorial. It was passed from hand to hand with an almost religious ceremonial. It was curious also to see the immense heaps of venison, beef, and fish with which the dishes were loaded, and upon which the appetite of the bar exercised itself with calmness and dignity, but in so resolute and determined a manner as to announce that it would not soon be over!

Another time, I was seated at the national banquet of about sixty Scotchmen, and, having some Scotch blood in my veins, I was received with marked courtesy. The repast was sump-

tuous and elegant; there was no Latin song, but occasionally a promenade round the table by a Highlander in the costume of his country, blowing from his huge and expansive chest into his bagpipes, whose well-known sounds, affecting the hearts and ears of the company, impressed on their countenances a still stronger hue of happiness and patriotism. Whether it was illusion, or the effect of a few glasses of champagne, or the voice of Nature which spoke in me, I know not, but I could not help partaking the influence. At the dessert all the toasts given at public dinners were proposed and drunk: the first was "The King!" followed by nine hurras, with a pause for breath between each three rounds. The chairman in a few minutes gave "The health of the Royal Family," which had its three hurras. That of "The Army," "The Navy," and "Scotland," followed, and were each received and saluted in the same manner.

If you will take the trouble of counting, you will see that, as at each health a good glass of wine was drunk, by the time Scotland was duly honoured, we had swallowed down five,

(without speaking of the various libations of champagne and other sorts which during dinner had already taken the same road,) besides screaming hurras twenty-one times! But they did not stop there: one of the company proposed another glass in honour of the "Thistle;" another proposed, as is customary, the health of the chairman; and he, after having returned thanks with an ease and readiness that showed him long used to such doings, all at once, without seating himself, proposed—judge my surprise and alarm—my health! This was followed by applauses which only added to my confusion. It was necessary that I should rise; the hint was given me very charitably by a push of the knee from my right-hand neighbour (the son of Lord S....n). I have forgotten what at last I succeeded in saying, in order to express my thanks in a foreign language, and before people of whom I was acquainted only with the chairman and my friend of the officious knee. All that I can recollect is my embarrassment, which was, however, surpassed by that of my successor,

(a brave and loyal general,) who, when we had added to his health another glass to all those we had already forced down, remained speechless on his legs, after the first and only word of his discourse, which was "Gentlemen! —hem! hem!—Gentlemen!—hem!" and a bow; "Gentlemen!" The last time the word was pronounced in so feeble and agitated a tone of voice, that the chairman saw it was time to come promptly to his aid, and, taking up the speech, attributed the sudden silence of the good general to his gratitude and emotion. Three animated hurras, which followed, seemed to restore his faculties; and he sat down in the midst of the applause, which was doubtless a very pleasing consolation to him.

Let me add a few words on this subject: this very general, who trembled with an emotion so great as to render him incapable of speaking, and this at a dinner only, had often with the same voice, but then strong and sonorous, given the word of command to many regiments during the noise of cannon and the devastating effects of shot and shell, without one pulsation of his

heart being hastened; he had distinguished himself often and often in the Peninsular war by his courage and calmness! Tell me how you explain this: seek the example in yourself; you who, though young in your military capacity, was as brave and firm before the enemy as he of whom I have been speaking; and yet I have seen you turn pale and tremble when the name of a certain lady was announced in a drawing-room! a name which you never dared pronounce yourself!

After this, it would be useless to continue the history of my dinner. I have been guilty of a great blunder; I have awakened remembrances which will cause you to forget all my lawyers and their large wigs, my Scotch banquet, &c. I had better let you recover yourself, and be in quiet for some days.

So farewell.

LETTER VIII.

The Middle Class.—Mr. Jackson's Family.—The double knock.—Mr. Jackson's Drawing-room.—Introductions.—A Dinner Party.—The Dessert.—Departure of the Ladies.—Music.

To-day, on my own authority, I am going to take you with me to dine with a family of which there are thousands in London, inhabiting one of the third or fourth-rate squares, or one of those eternal long lined streets, which are all exactly alike, with houses built of brown bricks, three stories high, three small windows in front, excepting on the ground-floor, where the door fills the place of the third. These are inhabited by merchants, bankers, rich tradesmen, land and fund holders, lawyers, and other professional men. The least affluent of these families spend about a thousand to fifteen hundred per annum; and some of the richest possess incomes of five

or six times that amount. They make a part of that community, so numerous in England, called the Middle Class; where there are so many examples of wealth and of expensive habits, and which you may again and again divide into different ranks.

I will choose one which may be considered as a fair *juste-milieu*: and it is at Mr. Jackson's that we will go to dinner. His house is situated in Baker-street, near the New-road which leads to the City, where he often has business, in attending to which he takes advantage of one of the many omnibuses or stage-coaches constantly going and returning, only paying sixpence for his journey, whilst Mrs. Jackson drives in the Park with two of her daughters: to-morrow she will take the other two. In these families there are generally from four to six, and sometimes even eight or ten children; I have seen as many brought in to dessert by two or three nurses. All the intervals at table are then filled up with little shining heads carefully brushed and the hair separated: this is the moment for the cakes and fruit!

But here we are at Mr. Jackson's door. Though we are in silk-stockings (which are *de rigueur*), we have arrived on foot along the very clean pavement without the least dust upon our fashionably-varnished shoes. I must now show you how a gentleman should knock with the bright brass knocker before us. He must not be guilty of the great roll and noise of a footman announcing a visit in a carriage; neither must he give the one modest knock of a tradesman or messenger; nor the little tap of the milliner's girl; nor even the rapid double knock of the postman, which makes every one start from his seat. To acquire the proper style, demands no little study, I assure you; it is effected by two or three shakings of the knocker, which must then stop short.

You will never at such an hour as the present be kept a moment at the door of a house like Mrs. Jackson's, for a dinner-party makes every one alive and alert; if, on the contrary, you called at the house of a great and rich personage, at whatever hour it might be, there are always three or four lounging and lazy lacqueys in the

hall, who have only to open the door; and custom has given them such sagacity in this respect, that in the difference with which every gentleman knows how to knock, they guess his rank before answering him, and you may thus measure the quickness and civility, or negligence, with which they perform this duty.

Let us now go in to Mrs. Jackson's: the servant conducts us up one flight of stairs; the narrow carpet placed in the middle of the white, clean, stone staircase, tells us where we are to tread in ascending it: here we are in the two everlasting drawing-rooms, opening one into the other; you will find it invariably so in every house of this kind in London. Here the family, full dressed, is assembled; Mrs. Jackson and her four daughters are seated all in a row. On our entrance they rise, and I present you, saying, "Mrs. Jackson, will you allow me to introduce my friend Mr. A;" and then we pass on to the young ladies, to whom, without further ceremony, it is sufficient to name you, first addressing the eldest, "Miss Jackson, Mr. A.—Miss Eliza, Mr. A.—Miss Maria, Mr. A.—Miss Do-

rothy, Mr. A." ; and then to the great son with red hair, " Mr. John Jackson—Mr. A." At each of my introductions, in return for your low bow, they give you a little nod of the head, so as just to touch the upper part of the chest with the chin. After this ceremony, we all sit down, and fall into a profound silence, which will be interrupted rarely by Mrs. Jackson, who will question you on the epoch of your arrival in London, whether you have been to the Opera (this is fashionable), and then upon the weather of yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow : or perhaps you will hear a low-toned voice, which seems to issue from the chest of a young child ; it is that of Miss Maria, who is a head taller than yourself, and who has ventured to ask a question of her mother, to which she has replied by another little assenting bow.

At last hurried steps are heard, and the door opening briskly, Mr. Jackson in person appears, who excuses himself for his delay on account of some business which he says kept him ; he shakes your hands both at once in each of his, and tells you dinner is served ; and then you

offer your arm to Mrs. Jackson, I take that of the timid eldest daughter, and we descend to the ground-floor, to the dining-room, which, like the two drawing-rooms, is everywhere the same, in form, size, and situation. You can hardly fail to observe all the brilliant plate, not only on the table, but also on the sideboard, where trays of every size, goblets, covers, plates, and other objects of the same metal are ranged against the wall: this display puts one in mind of a silversmith's shop. The table is out of all proportion long: each end is occupied; the one by Mr. Jackson, who undertakes to serve the fish and to carve the large joints (such as an immense turbot, and then an enormous piece of roast-beef); the other end by *madame*, who, having placed you on her right and me on her left, begins to serve the soup: she will afterwards ask you to carve the everlasting boiled fowls, *à la sauce blanche*. As to the French *ragouts*, which are ranged lengthwise down the table in covered dishes, be careful and avoid them; I recommend it as a friend. You have accepted soup, and I see that you are astonished to find little co-

telettes, bones, forced-meat balls, &c., swimming about; the Cayenne pepper and other hot spices cause you to make a grimace, whilst they burn your throat: never mind! eat some turbot, you will find it excellent.

You must now bravely "screw your courage to the sticking-place;" you are nailed to that chair for the space of two hours and a half at least, without any chance of conversation, except only a few interrupted words, each person speaking occasionally in a low tone to his or her neighbour. The burly Mr. Crack, to whom Mrs. Jackson introduced us, has as yet only opened his mouth for the purpose of endeavouring to satisfy his extraordinary appetite; this, however, appears to be labour in vain: he is placed in the middle of the table, and fills the place of two persons, whilst he eats enough for four. As to that *soi-disant élégant*,—that little personage placed next to Miss Maria, who cannot turn his head on account of his stiff black stock which keeps it in prison,—you will guess by his ridiculous affectation, and exaggerated politeness to his neigh-

bour, to what sphere he belongs; particularly when, during the dessert, on her asking him the favour to give her an orange, he will take it up between two spoons, one in each hand, his elbows raised and his fingers extended. The only speech which you will have heard him utter was when good Mr. Jackson cried out after emptying his glass, "After all, the climate of England is the best in the world!" and he rejoined, "It is unquestionably true!" Thus pass two hours! However, at last, the cloth is removed, and we continue round the well-rubbed or polished mahogany table. At this point of the entertainment Mr. Jackson makes us a bow, pronouncing at the same time a few indistinct words; we all return his bow. This, after dinner, is a regular custom,—a sort of *agimus tibi gratias*, which is thus said in abridgement.

The table is now covered with crystal, fruit and flowers, and wine decanters: these are first arranged in battle-array before the host; and at his signal, made by pushing the first round, they begin their promenade of the table, one

gentleman sliding them along to the next: the ladies take a little, taste the fruit, and, after having occupied some moments in putting on their white gloves, rise, following the example of Mrs. Jackson; we all do the same, but only to conduct them to the door of the room. Here, however, the force of habit makes you forget the recommendation I had given you,—you try to escape; but a hand retains you by the tail of your coat: it is that of Mr. Jackson, who observes to you that you have still a bottle of claret to finish with him. Mr. Crack too had made a polite effort to rise on the departure of the ladies, but his own weight reseated him; he has now got to the raisins and preserved fruits, &c.

After another mortal hour, a servant enters, and announces that the tea and coffee are taken up stairs: we ascend; Mrs. Jackson advances to us immediately, she asks if we play or sing, and tells us how amiable we should be to do so,— this a request rarely addressed to an Englishman, one is too sure of a reply in the negative. Mrs. Jackson appears very much

astonished that neither you nor I can satisfy her in this respect; and after many protestations in order to convince her, she makes a sign to Miss Dorothy, the great musician of the family, who opens the piano, places her two feet on both pedals, and begins a confused din, under which the instrument itself appears to suffer. When she has finished, you will be much embarrassed to tell me whether it were an adagio, a waltz, or a quadrille which she has favoured us with. But, never mind: like great Mr. Crack, who is seated in his arm-chair digesting his dinner, you cry out "delightful!" This is all that is required.

At length midnight is nearly arrived, and ceremony and restraint, the *nous ne savons que faire*, still reign at Mr. Jackson's: having wished them good-night, let us go!

LETTER IX.

John Bull. — His Character. — English Ladies. — Unmarried Women.—Insensibility to Music.—English Singing.—Native Painters.—Sir Thomas Lawrence.—Water-colour Exhibition.—Posting.—Postilions.

BEFORE you take leave of London, my dear Augustus, you must make acquaintance with a certain person called John Bull, the type of the English people, or rather the real Englishman, whether peasant, tradesman, workman, farmer, innkeeper, &c. He is of tall stature and strong-built frame; his voice is high and peculiar, as if entirely from the head; his air cold and indifferent: he is rough, sometimes rude, and always without ceremony. Short breeches, grey stockings, high-laced shoes, a pot of beer, and a long pipe, are the attributes by which he may generally be recognised:

these, nevertheless, do not exclude good qualities, and he really possesses many. He is moral, religious, and kind, I believe, in the main. Without the theatrical pride of the Spaniard, he possesses one, peculiar to him, which is more firmly rooted ; he appears to know his own value, and that he has rights of which nothing can deprive him except his own demerit. He knows and respects the laws, and when he obeys a constable, it is because he is one of the people, and he himself may become such in his turn; but he does not like the armed force (soldiers off duty are always without their arms in England). John Bull thinks much less of military glory, which he calls *stuff*, than of the taxes which he pays to keep up the army. He values much more a manufacturer, a sailor, or an industrious labourer, than a grenadier, hussar, or even a general. He rarely sings the pleasures of love ; but he knows how to make it, I have no doubt: ask those pretty rosy Betties, Jennies, and Mollies, if I am not right? Neither does he sing the pleasures of drinking, but he drinks deep and long. He is very neat

in his person; and in general, in these classes, the men are better dressed, and have a better air, than the women: it is just the contrary in some other countries that we know, where the women possess the superior mien and appearance.

To finish my sketch: John Bull is calm; he likes simplicity, and goes straight to his point, without losing his time in useless words; he never insults others, nor will he suffer himself to be insulted either by word or blow; and no gentleman, however great he may be, dare strike either with hand or cane a common man in England, without exposing himself to a severe chastisement.

The English ladies deserve credit for the use they have made of the good intelligence—I might almost say, friendship—which has existed between their country and the Continent for the last few years, in their improved taste and elegant appearance. It is now rare indeed to see beauty entirely defaced as it used to be, and all its charm destroyed by awkwardness, particularly by a ridiculous style of dress. The elderly

ladies, however, seem to stand more rigorously to their ancient habits; and, instead of adopting a graver style of dress, both in form and colour, —a neatness and freshness suitable to their age, and thus still preserving the power to please,— on the contrary wear at sixty, turbans, feathers, sashes and bands, &c. which display more fully their age, and are a virtual mockery on their pretensions. What would you have said, if, twelve or fifteen years ago, you had met in England a hat with pink feathers, a light green satin spencer, white gloves, and light buff-coloured shoes, all carried out to walk by a grandmother, her face plastered with red and white! But such things no longer exist, except perhaps in some country corner far distant from the capital.

Young women in England are introduced into society about the age of seventeen: from that time until their marriage, which rarely takes place before they have attained the age of twenty-four or twenty-five, they enjoy their liberty and the pleasures of the world; and what cannot but inspire an advantageous opinion of the

character and morality of a portion of the young Englishmen is, the confidence which is placed in them in according them the opportunity of conversing alone, and even walking alone, with young girls; a liberty which, without perhaps ever sinning against propriety, cannot fail to astonish a foreigner accustomed to the reserve and great timidity of unmarried women on the Continent, — a timidity which sometimes approaches to the ridiculous at a ball. In England, after having danced with a young lady, you do not offer her your hand in order to reconduct her ceremoniously to her mother, and there to receive her courtesy of thanks; but it is your arm that you present, which she takes without hesitation. She then walks about with you through all the different rooms, even into that which contains the refreshments; and, in fact, remains with you until another cavalier offers his hand to replace you.

I ought to add here, that in the upper classes they begin to imitate in this respect the reserve of the Continent. It would perhaps be no harm if the imitation stopped there; but

why should it be carried to another more important point? Listen, and judge if it is not to be regretted that it should! I will suppose you to be in the country, in one of those romantic retreats of which there are so many in England, and where all that renders life agreeable is so well prepared for you that you have only to resign yourself to amusement. I imagine you there walking in the solitary park early in the morning, before the dew is off the grass: you unexpectedly meet the daughter of your host, of him who has received you under his hospitable roof. Instead of avoiding you, it is she who advances towards you; her walk, and the warmth of the now risen sun, have spread over her cheeks a tint like that of the newly-gathered rose which she carries in her hand; the blue ribbon of her straw-bonnet is untied, and her dress is of the simplest kind. The thick silk handkerchief passed round and round her throat, leads you to guess that she has been even earlier than yourself, and found it necessary at first to protect herself from the cold of the morning. Her *chaussure*

is equally simple, it is a thick leather shoe which entirely covers the foot. My dear Augustus, it is not with a restrained bow, in which you discover the embarrassment of being met alone, that you are greeted, but with a smile as pure as the balmy morning air. With an extended hand she offers you her morning salutation: a moment after, you are the companion of her walk (she would have thought it extraordinary if you had asked permission); and you find yourself at the extremity of the park alone with her, alone with this young girl of eighteen! She is beautiful! more than beautiful! and yet you feel as if you were with your sister! In her manner, in her words, there is so much frankness, so much simplicity; she looks at you in speaking so openly, so naturally, that I repeat it, Augustus, you see in her only a sister; any other sentiment, however passing, would appear to you an insult to yourself!

But now change the situation: suppose the existence of another sentiment, of a mutual and allowed affection; then would you not find a

most valuable privilege in the possibility thus offered to two beings mutually to know and appreciate each other before that indissoluble union for life? to have time sufficient, licence granted, and without restraint? Think of all the charm that such moments must possess; how happy must be their influence and their after-recollection to both! and then, my dear brother in arms, you will perhaps agree with me, that it would be matter of regret if England should imitate in this the habits of the Continent, and, from a new caprice of fashion, restrict this liberty, which, when pure and innocent, can only serve to embellish her who enjoys it by drawing out those many valuable qualities which reserve teaches her to conceal: it will indeed be one of the loveliest flowers which the English ladies will themselves have torn from their heads!

Here I stop, for I should talk for whole hours, I believe, upon the subject; but I will spare you; besides, I have no more room, as I wish to finish with London in this letter, and go with you into the country: so I pass

from a subject where I was all heart, to one where it entirely fails me,—I mean to English music! It is true, I have vaunted the many other qualities which the English possess, sufficiently to be allowed to say that that nation is perhaps the least musical that I know. There are certainly some distinguished performers, and occasionally great talent to be met with in society; but the mass "knows nothing about it." The men in general do not comprehend or feel it; harmony has no power over their nerves; for the most part, they look upon a musician as a secondary sort of being, but they do not the less go to the Opera to cry "Brava, brava!" drawling out the first syllable of this word to a great length: and why? because it is good style to do so!

In fact, there does not exist a single composer—at least as far as I know—in all great Britain, excepting perhaps a Mr. Bishop; who is not without a certain talent, not for composing, but for arranging, for putting together the music he borrows from other nations, for a species of little opera or vaude-

ville, which should be called Anglo-Franco-Germano-Italiano; like a *salade en Macedoine*, where all the ingredients are so mixed together that you do not know what you are eating. In Mr. Bishop's works may be detected many passages which seem like ancient acquaintances, to whom you are just going to give a name, when a stranger arriving, *à l'Anglaise*, puts your memory at fault.

I could always anticipate the end of his duos, when sung on the stage, by the manœuvre of the two singers, who at this moment generally retreat gradually each towards his or her respective side-scene; so that the unfailing shake which finishes every English air, the applauses, and the bow or courtesy, fall exactly at the instant when there is nothing to be seen but the arms and head, the rest of the person having disappeared behind the scenes.

Now, is it not remarkable that the most valuable galleries of pictures known in the world should exist in that very country where, considering its great resources and general liber-

ality, painters are the most neglected? These galleries for the most part belong to individuals, and are composed principally of the *chefs-d'œuvre* of the old masters, and of chosen bits of the foreign schools; whilst the work of an English artist can scarcely find a modest place in them. If of the many thousand guineas given for old pictures, of which some are certainly very fine, but others so old and so dark that it is more than difficult to discover in what their great value consists,—if, I say, a part of these enormous sums were expended in supporting and protecting native talent, there is no doubt that this art would soon receive an impulse towards a more elevated order; for it is not talent that is wanting. Without speaking of many other artists, can there be anything more *spirituel*, more natural, than the charming productions of Wilkie, Rippinggale, &c. &c.? It is true they are all fancy pieces, or *tableaux de genre* for the drawing-room or boudoir; but Martin, Haydon, Etty, &c. have they ever received the least

encouragement in their efforts to reach, in historical pictures, that point which their great talent promised? Shall I add, that one of these very distinguished artists was, a few years ago, in the greatest state of want? and that one of his pictures was sold by subscription, a few persons charitably interesting themselves in him, in order to procure him bread! And this in a country where more than one noble lord gives, without hesitation, as much as a thousand guineas for a Murillo, or a simple head by Rembrandt! But it is the fashion; and, as I must again and again repeat, before its magic power everything bows down, everything succumbs in England!

The little encouragement given to English painters compels them to paint portraits, nothing but portraits, as the only means left to attain some degree of celebrity; and what is still more essential, but not so glorious, some degree of fortune. Thus it happens very frequently, when you pay a visit, that, when the servant leaves

you in the drawing-room whilst he goes to let his master know that you are there, you make acquaintance with every member of the family without passing through the introductions and usual compliments; their portraits being all there staring you in the face.

In Sir Thomas Lawrence, England has lost one of the greatest artists she ever possessed in this style; who, to his superiority as a painter, and his truth and purity of colouring, which proclaimed a pencil that never doubted or hesitated, added a quality quite peculiar to himself, that of giving to his likenesses an air of distinction and nobleness which could not fail to please excessively in England, and to make every one run after him; his secret was, to lengthen the neck, diminish the head, and widen the shoulders, as might be needed; three things which are generally found together in his portraits, and but rarely in nature. He painted almost exclusively great people, or their children, "as they were to pass to posterity."

It is easy now to understand why the nation-

al exhibition in oils is so insignificant; and when I repeat that it is rather the fault of the nation than that of the artists, I think I am only doing justice to the latter. So I go on with pleasure to another annual exhibition, that of the water colours, in which the English artists are eminently superior. The touch, the grace, and effect of these drawings are incomparable; and their variety is astonishing. In my opinion, one of the first of these artists is Copley Fielding; some of his works make you doubt if oil could ever attain so great a degree of perfection: his pencil seems to give reality to air and space. In his effects of sun-set, and in his sea-views particularly, his power is sometimes magical; I have stood in admiration before pieces of his, where one really saw through a light fog twenty miles of distance. One was tempted to take a telescope to try to discover upon this distant horizon the vessel which the naked eye could not distinguish.

But enough of London: let us quit it to run over verdant England, her meadows, and

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charming villages; to see her beautiful trees, her cottages covered with roses and jasmine, and, not least, my favourite roads. We will post it; it will be more agreeable and convenient. Our post-boys! they look as if they had been made expressly for that purpose, with their little light stuff striped jackets, and their grey hats. "How polite they are, and how nice they look!" said the Countess Al—— de N. when she came into England from France.

Now we arrive at the first stage: every one in this country may keep post-horses by taking out a licence, for which he pays a certain sum. These establishments are all the better served from being so numerous, as self-love and interest are always in action. As soon as we shall be perceived from a distance, the bells of the different inns will give the signal for the horses to be held in readiness. In the twinkling of an eye the little postilions are mounted and ready before their house; and those that you do not

take, put their hands politely to their hats as you pass. In this rank in England the hat is never taken off to bow.

A pleasant journey to you, Augustus: I shall soon rejoin you.

LETTER X.

A new subject.—Primogeniture.—Ancient Castles.—Berkeley Castle.—The great Hall.—The Prisoner's Tower.—Edward the Second's Room.—Family Portraits.—A courteous Invitation. — Perpetuity of Property. — Anecdote. — English Luxury.—Support of the Poor.

We have quitted London and its environs, and I now arrive at a subject which I approach with hesitation. It is a delicate one to me, as I had promised myself only to speak of the habits of society, and of the every-day life of the English, avoiding anything which had connexion with the politics or the constitution of the country. Such subjects appear to me too serious for letters of this kind, and perhaps to treat of them is beyond my ability; but as I am in some sort picking England to pieces, would it be just to pass unnoticed one of the finest gems of her crown? Can I be

silent upon what distinguishes her from every other country?—I mean the number, grandeur, and antiquity of her estates! The religious respect attached to these recalls the remembrance of family annals, tragical as well as glorious. The national pride to preserve them, and the constant care and improvement which from time to time they receive, are highly honourable to the nation.

But to arrive at the primary cause, at the basis upon which all this may be founded, there is but one step to take,—"succession by right of primogeniture." Supposing then, in order to avoid all embarrassment or difficulty, that I have no opinion on this subject of political economy, upon which the two most powerful nations of this century are at issue, (which in itself would be sufficient to impose silence on me,) there remains nothing for me but to depict, as well as I can, what I have felt.

I confess, that I have been always surprised and affected when contemplating those ancient castles in England, each of which possesses its antique legend; whose massive walls have re-

ceived, from the long succession of years and seasons, many varied tints, grave and melancholy, which all the subtilty of art, and all the power of gold, in vain seek to imitate; where the most careful vigilance discovers and cements the smallest stone which the course of time or the violence of the elements may have shaken. I again and again admired those majestic trees which age alone has the power to destroy; which, grouped or isolated in the extent of a park, beautiful in grandeur and silence, lend their shades to herds of deer, who, not recognising in you the person whom daily care has rendered them familiar with, and feeling themselves interrupted in their tranquil domain, suddenly raise their startled heads at your approach, and, looking at you fixedly for a moment, strike their feet against the ground and bound elastically away!

The interior of the castle, without having lost any of its ancient character, is far from saddening you by an air of abandonment and desertion, or want of life; it is, on the contrary, renewed and embellished by all that the

taste and luxury of the present day can add to the grandeur of the feudal time. Whether the proprietor be there or not, whether he be on the Continent or in the Indies, the same order is established and maintained, the same continued attention observed; his immense fortune gives him the means of keeping servants of all kinds dedicated to the various occupations which such a property render necessary, and who never quit it.

I will take one from among those I have visited, to give you an idea of them; it shall be Berkeley Castle, belonging to a peer of the realm, descended from a long line of ancestors. This castle is not, when compared with some others, one of the most considerable, either in its actual size, or in the estate which belongs to it; but it is one of the most interesting, from the historical recollections attached to it. The castle is in the county of Gloucester, situated on a height; the road to it, winding and ascending, passes through a picturesque village: in one of its turns, you suddenly find yourself in view of a gothic arched gateway, surmounted by the

carved coat of arms of the Earls of Berkeley, and shaded on each side by large trees. The internal court is a square formed of buildings with gothic doors and windows: a part of it, however, juts out more than the rest, and is terminated by a tower called, if I remember rightly, "the Prisoner's Tower." In front of the principal entrance is the door of the great hall; its roof is painted, its high walls are ornamented by all kinds of ancient armour—lances, long swords, halberts, gauntlets, cuirasses, helmets with visors; each one of these pieces has its memorable history, and the *ensemble* causes the heart to beat. An enormous chimney, still furnished with its dogs in iron, where thirty people might warm themselves with ease, reminds you of the meals of the vassals when the ancient lords presided.

Here you find the housekeeper,* who knows by heart the chronicles of the castle, so often

* One of the old and faithful family servants, belonging to another noble family, is said to have left by will, not long since, all her money, (some thousands of guineas,) to the eldest son of her master. It had been all gained by showing his ancient and beautiful castle in Warwickshire.

repeated; she reckons on the generosity of the visitors, and receives you in a very polite and attentive manner, particularly if you arrive in a carriage. She shows the place in all its details: the master, as you think, is absent; and it is to this liberality, almost universal in England, that you owe the pleasure of visiting so many beautiful places: the permission is rarely refused.

Following then, and listening to our conductress, she shows us a bed-chamber still furnished with delicate and curious work from the needle of a German princess, a Margravine, I think, and of royal blood,—who slept here a hundred years 'ago Upon the door of another room is written "Queen Anne's bed-room," where that princess reposed. There is a third apartment; but this is the Prisoner's Tower, lighted by a false window near the bed: and here our conductress lifted up a trap-door; and having prepared herself with a lantern she attached it to a long cord, and let it slowly down a depth of more than sixty feet, showing its dark and mouldy sides and bottom. It

was here that felons and traitors were formerly put to perish in misery.

You cross the internal court, and gain another wing of the building, where you see, still half furnished, the room where the unfortunate Edward the Second was so horribly mutilated and assassinated by order of his royal spouse, Isabella (one of our amiable countrywomen), and her lover Mortimer. The gothic bed upon which they pretend that the abominable crime was committed, is still there. A sofa and a few chairs of ancient form, covered with a coarse kind of stuff, and here and there with a few remains of gold and silk, still ornament this dismal place.

The mind feels relieved in quitting this tower, and visiting the chapel of the castle, which joins the principal suite of apartments. This is adorned with ancient carved and gilded wood, and a gothic lamp is suspended to the vault by a heavy chain. In front of the altar is the pew of the noble family, furnished with its old cushioned seats, and decorated in the front with the arms and coronet of the Berkeleys.

The castle it surmounted by a platform in lead, which covers the building in all its irregularity. It has battlements which were formerly defended by cannon, to chastise the vassals, or to repulse the attacks of some jealous aggressing baron. From this elevation, the view of the park and its environs is indeed admirable. Upon our questioning the guide as to the possessor of another building, whose beauty we admired from thence, and whose upper part, which we saw through the trees, looked very new for the scene which surrounds it, the good lady told us that it was the stables which his lordship had lately built.

At last we descended to view the part usually occupied by the lord and master, where the comforts and elegance of the day fraternise with these remains of ancient splendour. Two large drawing-rooms are filled with full-length portraits, representing the ancestors of the family; their names, marriages, and dates of their birth and death, are inscribed on them: some of the costumes are curious and interesting. As you approach the sanctuary where his lordship sleeps,

the paintings and furniture change in style and character; here are cabinet pictures by still living artists, the touch and composition of which are full of spirit and talent. These apartments indicate the owner to be completely a man of the world; one who loves its pleasures of every description, and whose fortune permits him to enjoy them. I cannot but recollect the courteous invitation he gave me, and my regret that I was unable to accept it, to pass a few days at the castle, the more so as some of our mutual friends were visiting there, and, among other agreeable perspectives, I had before me the temptation of killing fifty couples of pheasants in the space of a few hours. You will here recognise your former sporting friend; and it may perhaps remind you of our first youthful excursion, when our exploits served more to frighten than to hurt the poor little birds or rabbits that we met with. But England has spoiled me for the pleasures of shooting; and, since I have left that country, my Manton reposes in its case.

If you reflect upon the number of mansions,

as good as, or even superior to, the one I have been trying to describe, as well as on the thousands of others belonging to every different class, and which cover, one may say, the whole country, and make of it a never-ending park, do you not think the words "it is for ever," added to the picture, carry with them an idea of stability, of grandeur, and of strength, which is always prepared to resist all endeavours to overthrow order and social tranquillity? By its "for ever," I mean that in England, where today a property exists which, notwithstanding all that may be said, will, almost without exception, prove a shelter and support to the whole of the family, and which is much more likely to create in the breast that indefinable sentiment called love of country, than many other things which sound finer, you may return years afterwards, and you will neither find the house or castle pulled down, nor the materials sold to build farms and cottages, which in another twenty years will all be changed into three or four huts inhabited by paupers: you will not find the appertaining fields and

woods divided and subdivided to become in the same space of time pieces of half-cultivated ground, gradually diminishing in value, until some *parvenu* or stock-broker, having made his fortune, purchases the whole to rebuild a villa or mansion, with which he will not know what to do, being destitute of any society in the neighbourhood, unless indeed one of his companions, equally lucky as himself, should also make his fortune, which is not very probable, or at least not very easy, as generally speaking one only becomes very rich at the expense of the others. As the new master must die in his turn, like the rest of the world, the property is resold, again divided, and the same history recommences.

But in England you will see the same house, the same castle again; still full of activity and life, still in the same flourishing condition: and if after many long years you return, you will find perhaps a son who has succeeded to his father; and not only he, but the children of the peasants, workmen, and farmers, who were formerly employed upon the property, will also

have inherited the different employments which gave bread, ease, and comfort to their parents. Look at them, look at their forms, their habitations, their cottages; they are still the same, still ornamented with flowers, still as neat and as clean. The general appearance announces, as it did in other days, the same ease of circumstances and proportional happiness.

It is very probable that, in my ignorance as to political economy, I am unfit to pronounce which is the preferable side of this question for the general good; (the division of property and its perpetual maintenance, I mean;) but as to the individual good, if so it must be termed, of all those who, under the influence of this perpetual support, enjoy in England a lasting tranquillity, with their future means of existence assured to them, which in itself always serves to render a present benefit more valuable, you will permit me to say that this individual good exists, for I have seen it. In speaking of all those who live under this perpetual maintenance, I allude, not only to the thousands who possess such property, but to

the much greater number, upon whom are the results of this continuity spread. In Scotland, where property is generally entailed, agriculture has attained a high point of perfection; and it is generally allowed that the *cadets de famille*, thrown into the world without any other resource than what arises from a good education, end almost always by being richer than the eldest son: there also exists, in a remarkable degree, the desire of resting for ever by the side of the ashes of their forefathers.

I will give you an example of this: a Scotchman, ruined by a series of misfortunes, was forced to sell the inheritance of his fathers, and then departed for the East Indies; after the assiduous labour of many years, he succeeded in re-establishing his fortune, and his first care on arriving in Great Britain was to go in search of the person who had bought his estate. This was the good Duke of B., the father of the present duke, the richest landholder in Scotland. The former proposed to him to repurchase the estate, offering double the sum for which it had been sold; the duke replied, that although he

particularly wished to retain this property, which was situated exactly in the middle of his own possessions, and though he had bought it for that reason, yet he could not refuse to agree to a desire so noble and so natural, and that if he would repay the sum which had been given for it, he should again become its possessor. Each of these two truly noblemen now repose by the side of their ancestors.

I have heard the luxury in which many families live in England condemned: the properties are, it is said, too large; the advantages and privileges which result from them too marked, &c. It is very true that there are noble families, and others untitled, who are not the less immensely rich, who live in a splendour and luxury which, on the Continent, would not be met with at the courts of princes, and even of certain kings; and this particularly at their residences in the country. One must have passed some time with them, to form an idea not only of the luxury but of the continued and studied refinements which succeed to each other. It is indeed true that there are seats where not less

than eight to ten thousand pounds are expended a year only for the keeping up of the hot-houses, in order to secure the most rare and costly fruits that the earth has ever produced in succession. To descend to what is more modest, I may cite, that, after a day's shooting at Lord M.'s in Hertfordshire, we were seated at a table in a room with fifty wax-lights, a dozen servants in handsome liveries, besides two valets-de-chambre and a butler,—and all this for the service of *sa seigneurie*, the clergyman, another person, and myself; and certainly nothing unusual was done in honour of us, for every day it was the same there, as in many other country seats and in other families,—a simple dinner *tout-à-fait sans façon!*

If, then, anything may be said against this excess of luxury, principally by those who have not the means of procuring it, and who, if they were in possession of it themselves, would no longer condemn it,—if they speak of the poor, who, without always being thrust before you, still do not fail to exist, and in great numbers—still, before you judge, my dear Augustus, take

into consideration the immense sacrifices which the rich have imposed on themselves for the support of the poor, perhaps to plead in excuse for this very luxury with which they are reproached, besides the tax of eight millions raised by poor-rates (a sum which surpasses the entire revenue of more than one Continental state). A still greater amount is distributed, and with cheerfulness, for the support of this unfortunate class; not only by subscriptions which are constantly renewed, even in the most inconsiderable towns and in villages, with anxious solicitude, forgetful of fatigue, but, what is most praiseworthy, by women of rank and education, who feel a generous interest in descending into all the details of the distribution of food, clothing, linen, flannel, medicine even, of which they have made a point of informing themselves sufficiently to enable them to complete their power of being useful to their miserable fellow-creatures.

There may exist some abuses (and where do they not exist?) in the administration of the parishes relative to their duties towards the

paupers which each is obliged to maintain and succour; but the general effort to protect and assist poverty and misery, is everywhere evident: and when I think of all that I have seen in this respect in England, of all that my own experience has made me acquainted with, I cannot but repeat to myself, "Yes; I have ample reason to admire this nation!"

After all, a man (however expensive his habits may be) cannot *de facto* disburse for himself alone such immense incomes as many possess; these expenses lead to the support and well-being of a number of people who depend on them, and of many others not immediately dependent: and I should like to know if there be a better manner of enjoying a large fortune than that of succouring the poor and miserable, and then nobly and grandly expending the rest?

I wish, my dear Augustus, that you had the opportunity of doing all this, for I am sure you also would make a good use of it.

Adieu; you will perhaps some day be of my opinion.

LETTER XI.

Watering-places. — Dining out. — Evening Parties. — Champagne.—Cheltenham.—English Gentry.—Environs of Cheltenham.— Principal Street.—The Promenade.—Archery Society.— Ludicrous Scene. — The Water Drinkers. — Good-night.

AUGUSTUS,

TO-DAY I intend to give you some idea of one of the watering-places in England,—places which are visited, or supposed to be visited, for the purpose of drinking the waters, although the greater number of the visitors go there for any reason rather than that. Some, being entirely without fortune, resort to such places to endeavour by a most particular amiability to form a connexion by marriage which may repair this disadvantage, regarded in England with repugnance if not with contempt, as the most insupportable of all defects: prudent mothers try to rid themselves, by the same means, of one or

two of the half-dozen daughters they have brought with them. Others again—and these are the most assiduous visitors—are there to satisfy their decided taste for "dining out," and for frequenting evening parties and balls where there are plenty of refreshments or good suppers; "and a noble supper it was!" they cry, on greeting each other on the morrow. If, indeed, any real benefit is to be derived from drinking the waters (so much vaunted in each place which produces them) by those who suffer under impaired health, it is curious to see how much pains are taken to neutralize this benefit; not only by the custom of passing the greatest part of the night dancing in stifling hot rooms too small for the number of people assembled in them, but also by the intemperate dinners, which are every day repeated; by the quantity of wine of every sort that is drunk, particularly of a kind called champagne, (which in itself is enough to annul the influence of the waters, and of the doctors who recommend them,) whose production is attributed, with implicit faith and assurance, to a distant country,

which has no reason, I believe, to reproach itself on account of such a composition: but its questionable parentage is of no consequence; the "lively and delightful explosion" of the cork, flying out and sticking to the ceiling, suffices to bestow the title of *champagne*, and then each person vies with the other to do it honour by drinking as much as possible, in which the ladies, allowing themselves to yield to general enthusiasm, according to their capacities, rival the gentlemen.

I remember well a certain lady, of nearly six feet in height, near whom I found myself placed at one of these dinners, who said, on my asking her to take a glass of the said champagne—(it was doubtless in a moment of enthusiasm)—"Indeed I am so fond of this charming wine, that, if once I take it, I cannot take any other!" This was to "give me a hint," as they say in England, not to forget, during dinner, this, her peculiar taste. As to the constancy she had promised, she kept her word; for, after having exhausted my good-will, she accepted that of other guests more *amateur*

than I am. I have since learnt that she died suddenly of an apoplectic attack. Until I heard this, I confess I always "owed her a grudge," not for her fancy for champagne, but for some tall feathers of different colours which she had on her head, and which, during this long dinner, were tickling my head and face so as to oblige me continually to lean on the other side, to allow her greater space,—this necessity becoming more obvious each time that she had to exchange bows or noddings at every glass she took: my patience was still more tried, as I saw that this amused a certain lord opposite to us, with whom I was no favourite, I believe, because I never would bow to him the first when we met. You may believe that my ill-will for the poor lady was extinguished on hearing her misfortune; but, as to his lordship of D., I did not change my system of reserve.

One word more on these dinners: you know, perhaps, that it is not here as elsewhere, where it is only at the sign of the master of the house that the *sommelier* and *le maître d'hôtel*

pass round the table offering the different wines to the guests. Here, on the contrary, each guest, more thirsty perhaps from this power, disposes at his own will and pleasure of the cellar of his host; knowing there is always some one near him ready to consent to a challenge so agreeable as a glass of wine, and which he can scarcely take alone.

At present, I shall only speak of one of these places where I passed some time, and of which I retain, notwithstanding any apparent dash of satire in what I have just said, not only many agreeable recollections, but feelings of regret mixed with gratitude;—I mean, Cheltenham. Here it is impossible to trace the supreme fashion which we have left in London; and although some of its phœnixes occasionally deign to appear in this town, it is always like those meteors which only shine for an instant, but leave a brightness which is still contemplated after their appearance. For these, the most general rendezvous is Brighton, at the time the court is there. But do not conclude from this that at Cheltenham there

is neither good company, nor *gens comme il faut*, distinguished by birth and fortune. On the contrary, all of this is to be found; but people of a different stamp at the same time, which is of course to be expected in a place so frequented, and where visitors succeed to each other with such rapidity during the season. Here also are met a portion of that class so interesting in England,—the class which in my opinion should be called the first,—"the Gentry."* These live much in the country, in or near the provincial towns; and the most respectable are those who inhabit their own country residences, whose lives, calm and regular, are completely consecrated to their duties and family occupations, and whose simple but dignified manners inspire respect and beget a desire to be admitted into their circle. It is also to them that belongs the fame of that morality

* This class comprehends all who live on their incomes, whether arising from honourable professional employments, or from landed and funded properties: some of them are nearly allied to the nobility; others look upon themselves as more noble than the noble, boasting a more pure and ancient line of ancestors, &c.

and religious principle of which the English are so proud, and I think with justice; as this uncorrupted class forms in itself a large part of the population of England.

The environs of Cheltenham, particularly on the London side, (from which place it is distant about a hundred miles,) present the same picture of prosperity, wealth, taste, and neatness, that you find in those of almost every town in England. They are studded with cottages ornamented with flowers and creeping plants, which separate to give light to the little windows, which are thus set in a frame of verdure. Here are seen also those pretty country-houses, with their gardens and park-like grounds, so fresh and green, encompassed by palings always kept in good order, with gates newly painted; amidst all this, a road, sometimes winding in a picturesque and graceful manner, is seen, always smooth as a floor, upon which the carriages, stage-coaches, &c. appear to glide, or rather fly, almost without noise. The road has also two footpaths, made narrow, not to take too much of the precious earth

along which they run. These are bordered and supported by grass, and there the pedestrians travel in tranquillity, protected from the carriages, along a perfumed hedge formed of the hawthorn intertwined with honeysuckles and wild roses: all this is found in the environs of Cheltenham; there is something besides, which, upon arriving, seems to announce that you approach a place of amusement, for everything appears prepared to attract and keep you there. At a few miles' distance you have already met several horsemen and carriages, the people in which, seeking to meet your eye, seem to say "Who is that?—Is that any one whom we know?—Does this arrival promise us some more *soirées*, some more parties?" And then follows that second searching look upon the panels of your carriage, to see the arms, in order to judge of your rank.

You are soon in the principal street. At first, it is wide and spacious, formed of white shining houses with blue or green verandahs, the windows provided with light tents of

striped stuff of different colours to shade the apartments from the too strong rays of the sun. The street becomes narrower towards the middle of the town, where are situated the principal church, the libraries, the different hotels, the bankers, and shops and magazines of every kind. There also finishes the long avenue of trees and elegant houses which leads to the park, or rather to the different large gardens called walks, where flow the beneficent springs from which the sick, or those who fancy themselves so, come to draw their salutary influence. Spacious rooms have been built over them in form of rotundas or temples—(in summer, public balls are held there, sometimes by daylight): in the gardens there are also bazaars filled with all sorts of objects of fancy.

But, my friend, if you arrive, as I did, *en famille*, at Cheltenham, you must choose one of these middling-sized houses, where you find throughout good soft carpets, and where everything is complete and ready to receive you. There you have no trouble to arrange with the proprietor, no long explanatory meetings

and speeches, no lease full of impositions upon the tenant, no signatures to be exchanged; all that is necessary is to know the price, and, if it suits you, to reply that you will give it: you are immediately established master of it, and the servant who keeps it. As to acquaintances, they are not difficult to make.

The disorder of your toilet being repaired, and your lady under your arm, you issue out, and appear on the promenade: ten minutes are more than enough to recognise two or three persons whom you have already met in other places. Without losing any time, you are introduced to half the people on the walk; and a few minutes afterwards you find yourself invited for the very same evening to tea, to a piano-dance at Mrs. B.'s. To-morrow it will be to Mrs. St. G.'s, when the Miss F.'s are to sing their fine Italian airs. At these two *soirées* you will be engaged to half a dozen others; then to dinners, balls, parties of pleasure into the country, to pic-nics with the various persons whose acquaintance you have already made.

At Cheltenham, as well as in all other places, every one hurries to obey the imperious mandate of the goddess Fashion,—she who in England possesses more power to move and direct the multitude than the King and his assembled parliament; consequently, as it is (or was) the fashion to shoot with the long bow, of course, a place like this must also possess an archery society, composed of ladies, married and single, and of gentlemen. You are soon entreated to make one of them: then pray go and see them on the archery-ground; the quiver on the shoulder, the band tight round the waist; the left foot advanced, the weight of the body thrown on the right leg; the elbow of the right arm, which directs the arrow, elegantly raised up to the level of the ear; the left hand holding the bow, stretched out horizontally; the head well raised, turned to the mark, and the body presented to it *en profil*. Well, what do you think of this position; must it not be a most graceful one?

But now, only reflect for an instant, and tell me if it is not more than probable that,

among twenty or thirty persons whom the influence of fashion has assembled by chance, without reference to age, the greater number of whom could neither be prepared nor formed for a like exhibition, some from want of habit, others from want of suppleness and ease, many from the national *mauvaise honte* (of which we will talk hereafter),—will you not find it more than probable that many a *ridicule* would slide into such a meeting? Sometimes the corpulency of one of the archers would only permit him to wear his *ceinture* round the chest, his arms too short to allow him to stretch his bow well. After him would step forward a lady, no longer in the prime of youth, who from near-sightedness not being able to distinguish the target, (although it was seven or eight feet in circumference,) and the provoking impossibility of holding her eye-glass, was obliged to appear in spectacles, which could not fail to destroy the illusion of certain spectators, who wished to imagine their ladies real downright Amazons. After her, a young miss would ad-

vance, long and thin, who had, by coaxing and entreaties, induced mamma to let her have a bow also, and to be one of the company; but, when arrived, frightened at thus finding herself so much exposed to view, she becomes quite confused, and retires shamefacedly behind the others, thus giving up her turn. Then comes a tall, vigorous, impetuous young Scotchman, full of warlike and romantic notions brought from his mountains; and so eager is his ardour to pull his bow, that he did not even aim at the target, and the spectators, again losing their illusions, fled in every direction the moment that he raised his arm.

Ask Prince Kofflo—y what he thinks of an archery meeting? One day being on the left of the archers, believing himself in perfect safety, and wishing to judge of the grace and address of the ladies, of whom he is the gallant and constant admirer, he received an arrow suddenly upon his not small rotundity; it was fortunately pointless, and sent by a female hand,

and on striking him it only rebounded harmlessly.*

Every morning all the water-drinkers, *en negligée*, each with a bouquet of violets in the hand, walk in a favourite *allée*, whilst the band, to whose music they danced the night before, and who will again set them jumping the same evening, (for in England they jump in dancing a great deal, as you know,) play the choicest airs. Here they talk of the past ball, of the fatigues which so fine a morning already begins to dissipate so pleasantly; then of the wonderful effects of the waters at the moment when they have just swallowed a glass, which causes many an effort to hide the grimaces which the detestable taste has left in the mouth. Again, at two o'clock, there is another toilet for the promenade and the drives. At six in the evening they return, and make another for the dinners or *soirées*, and at last they reach home at two o'clock in the morning.

* A punster remarked that his highness had *a-n arrow* escape.

Although it is not so late at present, I am going to do the same, crying "enough for to-day." I will send you another letter on this subject; and so give you time to rest, and myself also. Farewell! *tout à vous.*

LETTER XII.

Sunday at Cheltenham. — Mauvaise honte. — Shyness. — An amiable Character. — An Accident. — A Village Clergyman. — Clandestine kindness. — The Clergyman's Dinner. — Mutual Embarrassment. — Regret.

My dear Augustus,

In my last letter I left you at Cheltenham, where everybody is seeking amusement; where time, money, and health are all expended in running after pleasure; and where a smiling face is put on to greet those who are pitilessly abused the moment their back is turned. But this activity, this worldly life, which never changes during the six days of the week, ceases on Saturday at midnight, as by the wand of the enchanter who cries "Disappear!" and all is over. On the morrow, Sunday, you would not believe you were in the same place, or among the same people. The streets are half deserted,

and quite silent; the public places, the shops, the libraries, all are shut, doors and windows; every face has become serious and thoughtful; nothing is heard but the bells of the churches and chapels, announcing the hour of prayer, all differing perhaps, but all addressed to the same Creator. Their sound is calm and grave, and stops the instant that prayers begin; then the silence is no longer an ordinary one, it is like a complete suspension of existence! The only impressive sound that you hear is the voice of the minister of God, as you pass by the church, which, in solemn and peaceful accents, vibrates through the interior; or else it may be the melancholy and affecting swell of the sonorous organ, accompanying the voice of children who are singing hymns addressed to their Maker. My dear Augustus, what adds to the impression that one receives at such a moment, (you will feel that I speak from experience,) is the idea that in the sacred place of worship whence issue these voices of prayers, and songs of gratitude and praise, all is addressed to God in the most simple manner, so much

better suited to the feeble creature in presence of his Creator, than when surrounded by pomp, incense, and pretended greatness.

Thus, Sunday, instead of being (as it is in a country you and I are well acquainted with) a day of pleasure and amusement, when the common people seek to forget their pains and sometimes even their misery, becomes here a day of seriousness and prayer, during which the only recreation which the women permit themselves is an almost silent walk, scarcely enlivened by a smile, whilst the men (I speak of the working classes) remain together drinking, smoking, and talking, and this generally within doors. On this great discrepancy I will leave you to judge for yourself. I will only add, that I have seen more than one country, where on the Sunday, after having been to church, people did not the less divert themselves in dancing, &c., trying to forget as much as possible the pains, fatigues, and privations of the week in innocent joy and pleasure; I have prayed with them in church, and I have afterwards felt how natural were

these joyous recreations, this cordial gaiety, which cannot be accused of impiety, as it is generally without excess. Shall I add that I have more than once danced at a village fête on a Sunday, and that I have known many others take pleasure in such meetings; and can I then cast blame on them? Well, you will say that I am a "*bien bonne ame.*" When we return to England, to the Sunday in Cheltenham passed so differently, I shall then also find no fault. The sudden transition may at first cause this day to appear sad and melancholy in the eyes of a stranger, but he will soon be sensible of many compensations; he will remark the comfort, the neatness, the good order in the interior of the habitations of the cottagers. The children are dressed in their best clothes. The bright and green country, and those pretty paths crossing the meadows enamelled with flowers, or running along the perfumed hedges which surround them, where the people walk, enjoying themselves so tranquilly; all this has undergone no moral change: it is all as beautiful, as agreeable on the

Sunday as on any other day; and even more so, as on that day the labouring classes have time and opportunity to enjoy them.

After having seen this, you will not resist, more than I did, the general impression; and you will even feel internally satisfied in partaking it. You will say with the whole nation "the Sunday is the Lord's Day," and you will pass the whole of it as such. On Monday morning, all the activity of worldly life recommences with more vivacity than ever: Dissipation, and her train of pleasures, appears only to have been put aside for an instant that she may take possession of the mind with greater strength and ardour. I remember especially one Saturday night, when she defended her posts foot by foot until nearly one in the morning; but the next day at church, during the sermon, reproaches fell from the pulpit upon the heads of the guilty; and that Sunday was one of the most repentant and lugubrious of any that I witnessed.

Whilst I was at Cheltenham, I had many opportunities of studying in a close manner

the different characteristics of English society; one of which is to be almost universally found, —I allude to what is called shyness. *Mauvaise honte* renders but a very imperfect meaning of this word: one may say of a man, "he is shy;" but to say "he is *honteux*," which is the only word that I know of to translate it, may give you the idea of something ignoble or base, whilst the character that I wish to paint is one which inspires me with great interest, and is just the contrary. *Mauvaise honte* betrays itself in different ways in England. In a room full of company there are many women who dare not move from a sofa, upon which they condemn themselves to pass whole hours; and if at last one of them ventures to cross the room, it is with an embarrassment and awkwardness which shows itself at every step, and which she would not perhaps exhibit if a fewer number of eyes or none at all were on her. The greater number of the men too, from the same reason, remain nailed to the wall, half hidden by a curtain, or else they never venture much beyond the door of the

drawing-room. But what I wish to depict is, the perpetual shyness in intimacy, in the family circle as well as in society, in a good, generous, amiable man; one who possessed the greatest simplicity of manners and habits, and whose modesty reached the point of fear, and this joined to the highest qualities of the heart and mind; for in himself he possessed qualities sufficient to have rendered many persons vain if they had been divided amongst them.

A propos to vanity, I am going to give you an example in myself, for I am very proud of having been distinguished by, and I think of having inspired a true affection in him to whom I here allude; and although he never breathed a word to me himself of his sentiments, (the very idea would have given him a fever,) yet his actions towards me, his kindness, (*fuyante* I may call it, which he tried to conceal immediately he had done anything to please or serve me,) all proved it to me, so that I can never forget it. And Providence seemed not willing to unite in one being so

many valuable qualities without giving him a companion capable to appreciate them; one who possesses herself, not only the most amiable virtues, but beauty, grace, elegant ease, politeness of manner and attention to her friends, which I might call exquisite without the least exaggeration. As for him, in the midst of all the luxury and refinements of a charming residence in the country, where taste and expense disputed the *pas*, and which was ever consecrated to hospitality; possessing four pretty children, in whose superior manners the care of a tender mother was already seen; loved, esteemed, and blessed by every one around him for all the good he did, he was only the more modest, the more shy: he feared more being surprised performing a good or generous action, than most others would in committing a bad one. I saw him one day in his library, where he had collected together at great expense and with great care all the best works in English, French, Italian, &c. all printed and bound in England; this was his kingdom, his most valued possession after his wife and

children. He was occupied in showing me some that were curious and admirable in type and binding, when one of his little girls entered with a message from her mother. With childish eagerness, she also wished to show me a "beautiful book," and climbing, unperceived by her father, on the mahogany steps, she tried to reach a magnificent volume, which, being too heavy for her little hands, fell with a noise that must have gone to the heart of the careful owner. He turned with unwonted quickness and picked it up, and on seeing the gilding knocked off, and the morocco binding broken, he exclaimed with great emotion, but without the least anger, "Jeannie! look what you have done!" The poor child, who had remained stupified on the top of the little steps descended sobbing, and quitted the library without being able to utter a single word. After following her with his eyes, and going to and returning from the door, at last he went out also: a moment afterwards I heard him call her with a tone that a father, such as he was, alone could possess, saying,

"Jeanie! will you not come to your papa?" He would undoubtedly have given many guineas that this misfortune should not have happened to his book; but the grief of his poor child pained him much more.

Another time we were to dine with the clergyman of the village, one of the prettiest in the environs of Cheltenham, near which was my friend's house. He had himself embellished and adorned the church, and it was particularly in this village that he did so much good. The clergyman was a man as much distinguished for his literary acquirements, as for his manners and exemplary conduct. He was not rich; but what many others would have called poverty he did not consider as such, and in him it was elevated and sustained by a behaviour always dignified. Do you not think that on a like occasion, (such as the invitation that I had from this clergyman,) one is more beholden, and indeed has more pleasure in being punctual to the hour indicated, than if the entertainment were at the table of a great duke?

I was flattered and pleased by the invitation;

so I presented myself at the worthy minister's cottage-door even before the time mentioned. The maid-servant, making excuses for her master, who, she said, was dressing himself, showed me into a small room on the ground-floor, communicating with another by folding doors, which were open. The one into which I entered appeared to serve as a drawing-room as well as study; a book-case filled with choice books, and a table covered with books and manuscripts, clearly announced its double use. The chimney-piece, as well as a window looking into the very pretty little garden, was ornamented with flowers: the furniture was plain, but exquisitely clean. I perceived in the other room the table laid for four persons, the linen of the purest whiteness. Near the table, brilliant with a small but sufficient quantity of plate and crystal, stood the dumb waiter (a table with shelves, which we call, I think, *une servante*): this was a frank avowal, made beforehand, that we should have to help ourselves during dinner.

I waited sitting in the minister's great chair,

in which he was wont to reflect on all his duties towards his parishioners, and where he composed his sermons, which always breathed a religion full of tolerance and encouragement. It appeared to me as if the calm and tranquillity which I had felt on entering the retreat were augmented, and I breathed more freely. This arm-chair even, in which I was so comfortably seated, exercised an influence upon my whole being; I had never experienced the same sensation. I felt in myself the desire of becoming better, (you will say there is room for improvement,) and, plunged in reflections which became more and more humble,—I began to doubt even if I were worthy of remaining in the seat I occupied,—when the door of the dining-room opened very gently, and the head of the kind father of little Jeanie appeared, looking cautiously round to be sure that no one was in the room. He entered without perceiving me, and drawing from his pocket a bottle,—which I quickly recognised by the form and colour as one of his excellent bottles of hock,—he placed it care-

fully on the sideboard amongst two or three others, probably of a less expensive kind, which were already prepared for dinner. He retired very quickly, as if he had just committed a disgraceful action, and I saw him immediately appear in the garden to see how the flowers were going on—flowers that he had also taken from his greenhouse to give to his friend. I took especial care not to interrupt him during his visit to the dining-room: I guessed the reason of this delicate and kind manner of giving, in order to avoid the thanks which must of course be offered for a present ostensibly made, however trifling in value it might be; and, at the same time, he gratified his habit of retiring the moment that he had performed a kind action.

The dinner was quite in accordance with the style of the habitation and the character of our host. Everything was simple, and the honours were done with a hospitality and sincerity which greatly increased our appetite. We even proceeded to acts of epicurism; for the

good minister caused to be brought to table a hot plate with its lamp, and placed in it with his own hands several tempting slices of a very tender wild duck, squeezing a fresh lemon with some Cayenne pepper over them, whilst the light vapour of the flame of the lamp produced a pleasant bubbling; he then offered us a specimen, as he termed it laughingly, of his talent in exciting the appetite. It was found excellent, and eaten with a great many compliments and thanks. And he too had a good share of "shyness," but in another manner. Clever 'as he was, he always appeared greatly embarrassed when in the society of ladies. He then never seemed to know what to do with his arms or legs, how to hold himself whether standing or sitting. Even his replies and his whole conversation partook of this *mauvaise honte.*

You may suppose that when the bottle of hock made its appearance, the shyness of my two friends was put to a sad trial. The fourth at table being almost a stranger, his presence in-

creased their mutual embarrassment. It was easy to see on the frank and open features of the clergyman an extreme desire to declare that his modest cellar could not have produced such wine; but then he must spare the friend he knew so well, and on whose face was easily discerned the fear of being accused. These few moments of interior combat between two hearts full of probity and goodness, and who so valued and loved each other, finished by a smile exchanged between them; and I, who unknown to them was in the secret, was truly touched by this little scene, which the discretion I had exercised enabled me to enjoy. You may judge if the friendship of two such men must not have been most precious to me.

I spoke in my first letter of the pains and griefs to which we all, alas! are subject. The good and generous man of whose character I have tried to give you a slight sketch has since been cruelly afflicted; his friend, too, from sympathy, I believe, has quitted his

cottage, his pretty garden, his holy and quiet retreat! This is sufficient to explain the regret which I feel when I think of Cheltenham, and which now stops me in the description of its fêtes and pleasures! Adieu.

LETTER XIII.

Wales.—Turnpike-gates.—War in Wales.—The first Prince of Wales.—Banks of the Wye.—A Shooting Box.—Inn at Crickhowel.—A Disappointment.—Grand Scenes.

My Friend,

I cannot give you any very ample description of the Principality of Wales, for I have seen but a very small part of it; but even that may give you some idea of it, and perhaps will interest you, as it will contain a history of all that happened to me during the short visit that I made to this part of Great Britain, so famous in her history.

I will begin by premising, (and thus indirectly praising the admirable English roads,) that a phaeton containing four persons, all comfortably at their ease—with all the necessary baggage,

even to a great patent varnished bonnet-box for madame, and the gun-case for monsieur, &c.—has run over nearly a thousand miles at different times, and going very fast, without the smallest repair having been needed—not even as much as tightening a screw. Consequently, when I hear it said that the turnpikes which are constantly to be paid in this country render travelling very expensive, I reply, that it is judging like the old French *émigré*, who found England uninhabitable because "there were," he said, "twenty-four religions and only one sauce, no ripe fruit but roasted apples, and that each man ruined his health in drinking to the health of others." It is as well judged as this: for if you consider that the money received at the turnpike-gates is the remuneration made for the keeping up of the roads, and if you put ten of these gates for every hundred miles, and count what you have to pay, you will find it, I think, more economical as well as more agreeable to expend ten shillings thus, than have to wait, as you do in countries without turnpikes, whilst your carriage, which has been broken by its passage over

abominable roads, is clumsily and expensively mended.

We took our departure from Cheltenham for the romantic country of the ancient Welsh bards, whose extemporary odes and warlike songs, accompanied by their harps, in former days animated the courage of their countrymen to defend their territory against the attacks of the English stranger who wished to conquer it. The history of England, so fertile in actions of this kind, and in intestine wars, relates many noble deeds of courage and of furious combats which took place in those ancient half-barbarous times between the valorous Welsh and the troops of Edward the First, as well as the destruction of their castles, whose scattered ruins, almost covered with earth and heath, are scarcely to be traced. The conqueror ordered the death of the bards, whom he accused as the principal cause of the heroical resistance he had experienced; and even in the present day you hear their sad fate and the regrets of the country sung in ballads, still accompanied by the ancient double-stringed harp, which they have preserved with care.

To make his conquest secure, King Edward caused his queen to go to the castle of Carnarvon, in the bosom of the country, in order to give birth to her child;—the Welsh, even after their defeat, having sworn that they would never obey a prince but one who was born in their country and who could speak their language. Edward then showed them his new-born child, and told them their conditions were fulfilled. This prince was afterwards the unfortunate Edward the Second, whose cruel fate I have related to you in speaking of Berkeley Castle. From this in some degree forced birth may be dated the title of Prince of Wales, since assumed by the eldest son of the King of England as heir apparent to the crown.

For more than twenty miles we followed the course of a river called the Wye, which we first crossed at Ross. Here is the richest of all picturesque views, combined with accidental effects, augmenting the beauty and grandeur of the pictures, which succeed each other incessantly. Sometimes the rocky heights, covered with forests or immense detached trees, appear to lean forward; and here and there, amidst green of every

shade, we discerned the pure whiteness of the country-houses. Then these hills disappeared suddenly.—At one of the bends of the river we perceived the ruins of the ancient castle of Goderich, near which the present proprietor is elevating a new building. The image of this mixture of past and present was faithfully depicted in the deep transparent waters of the Wye, even to the pride which the new towers seemed to take in elevating themselves on the ruins of the ancient. The effect of light and shade successively passing over our route, and over the river; the coolness that the latter deliciously imparted to us on a beautiful summer's evening, and in an open carriage on an excellent road; the general silence and calm of so many imposing and lovely scenes, only interrupted by our exclamations of surprise and admiration;—all this, my dear Augustus, I cannot well describe, but it is ineffaceably imprinted on my memory.

We were going into Brecknockshire, only for a few months; afterwards we were to visit the interior of the country, particularly the north,

which we had heard celebrated for the beauty of its views, its mountains, and its lakes. But, as says the proverb, "Man proposes, and God disposes." Not only did we meet with several disappointments in Brecknockshire, but they finished with a real catastrophe which entirely put an end to all our projected excursions. I had been taken, I confess rather foolishly, by the description that a gentleman in London had given me of a small property belonging to his brother. It was a shooting-box, "with a right of shooting over about twenty miles of land full of game; the house furnished comfortably, and situated in a delightful valley, with a stream running through it, good garden, &c." In fine, it was, in description, a perfect Elysium. During the first few miles after having really entered Wales, we began to perceive a difference in the character and habits of the people: there was no longer that striking cleanliness, that universal care. We stopped at a small town called Crickhowel: the shooting-box, from what I had heard, was in its neighbourhood.

We alighted at the only inn in the place, and very different it was from all those we had met with since our first departure from London; and after a dinner composed of a number of little dark fish full of bones, and of an old cock which the landlady called a superb chicken, I made a few inquiries about our future residence before I went to the man of business with whom I was to treat. At my first question she stared at me as if she doubted whether she had heard aright; and when I assured her that I came expressly from such a distance to take this house of Mr. M. she exclaimed, "Bless your soul, sir, you cannot live there—it is in such a state." Then she added, that there was no kind of inhabitant within eight miles; that it was a real desert; that no one lived in the house; and that a farmer's boy went occasionally to cut the vegetables, &c.

To satisfy myself of the truth of this description, which I doubted, I asked her to let me have one of her two post-horses, and immediately set out in the direction indicated in quest of the residence of Mr. M.—I will spare you the description, my dear Augustus; you

shall only hear, that after two hours of impatience and fatigue, for eight miles, over a road cut on the side of a barren mountain, and without meeting one living thing, excepting some plovers which passed over my head, saluting me with their plaintive cry, my horse walking or rather rolling over large stones, or into ruts, we both arrived at the "shooting-box:" and a pretty place it was! One never repents of having been discreet, and so I repeat I will spare all description of this house. I quickly retraced my steps, taking only a little hay, which my travelling companion willingly took charge of, devouring it with great avidity. The farmer's boy of whom my hostess had spoken, quickened by the hope of a *pour-boire*, had easily found him something to restore his courage and strength; and the good humour that the poor animal testified at length inspired me.

On my return I passed by the same places, looking at them with a better disposed eye. The solitude; the height of the hills, piled one on the other; the herbage or short dark heath which covered them as far as the eye could reach;

even the half-wild sheep, which I contrived to see this time, and which fled at the sound of the horses' hoofs over the stones which resounded in the stillness of these mountains;—this *ensemble* appeared to me imbued with melancholy but impressive grandeur. And as to the dear "shooting-box," I more than once regretted that I had not recollected in time the crow in the fable, which

——"jura, mais un peu tard,
Qu'on ne l'y prendrait plus!"

Adieu, my dear Augustus: the continuation in my next.

LETTER XIV.

Our Villa.—English Clergymen.—Our new Abode.—Hospitality.—A Landscape.—A magic Word.—The Clergyman's Family.—A Moonlight Ride.

We returned to our inn at Crickhowel, where we were necessarily obliged to pass some days before we were able to establish ourselves in a very pretty little villa at about six miles' distance, belonging to a clergyman who resided in the neighbourhood. To tell you how we procured this compensation for our disappointment would be useless; therefore I will only say that we took possession—and many were the attentions and kindnesses we received from the reverend owner. You will not be surprised at the great preference and even respect which shows itself in everything that I say

of this class so honourable in England, when I add that in whatever place I have been, and under whatever circumstances, I have always received the same impressions—always found (at least almost always) amongst those who compose it the same simplicity of manners, the same belief in divine mercy, the same regularity of conduct, much charity, and generally much learning without the least pedantry; and in even the curates of small and poor villages, always the behaviour of men whose superiority commanded respect. When you reach the end of my letters on England—when you become acquainted with another, the latest clergyman that I knew;—he who at seventy years of age, after a reproachless life, reinspired my sinking courage, and supported a heart broken by the most cruel of misfortunes; and this with such kindness, with words so full of religious and consoling philosophy, without which existence at that time would have become a burthen to me;—then, when I shall speak more fully of him, when I shall endeavour to depict his venera-

ble character, you will judge if such affectionate remembrance and such esteem as I feel have not been merited.

Our villa was situated on the ascent of one of those mountainous chains which traverse this country in every direction, and was about half a mile from the high road to Brecknock (the chief town of the county), upon a cross road, at its point of meeting with the high road. A few houses assumed the dignity of a village, and was called Bwlch—(try to pronounce that word, it is pure Welsh, and signifies, I believe, passage or bridge). About a mile beyond our house on the right was a large lake, bordered by woods and scattered farms; and it was there that I promised myself much sport.

Some days after our installation in our new abode, the Reverend Mr. D. our landlord, arrived with his wife to make us a visit, and to entreat us in the most hospitable and pressing manner to dine with them, saying their carriage was there, and that it should take us

back in the evening. We had three or four miles to go; and during our route, whilst I was seated at the side of the minister, he told me with the greatest simplicity that his horses did the work of his little farm and of the fields which surrounded his cottage, thus combining the useful with the agreeable. They also served to take his wife and children out airing, and, as I saw, to fetch a friend who might favour them by partaking in their family dinner: and this hospitality was offered to us on our second meeting.

I do not think, during the whole of our drive, we ever went a hundred yards in a straight line. The road was good, and appeared planned from fancy, alternately turning from the right and the left, ascending and descending, passing through woods and masses of rock, amongst which were often seen the red-tiled roofs of the humble cottage. After a rapid descent bordered and shaded by high trees, we came upon the pretty river Usk, and crossed it by a bridge.—Ah! why were you

not there, my dear Augustus, with your sketch-book and pencil!—The limpid and tranquil stream made itself a passage, gently murmuring through the rocks, tinted with various colours, purple, red, and blue, and covered with flowering plants, whose large leaves, supported by their long and slender stems, floated upon the surface of the river and partook of its undulations. The principal point in your picture would be the clergyman's carriage slowly and prudently passing over the old stone bridge.

On our arrival, the minister introduced one of his friends to us, Mr. H, who during dinner excited my curiosity greatly by speaking of the immense iron-works which were situated in the neighbourhood, and of which he himself was in great part the proprietor. He had besides spoken of the famous grouse-shooting, the time for which was close approaching. This was, as you know, touching a very sensible chord in my breast. The sport was to begin in a few days, upon the heights of these very hills, and along their never-ending heaths

and plains. My informant added, however, with an air which appeared to compassionate me, that the ground belonged exclusively to the Duke of B——, and that a permission signed by him was indispensable for those who wished to enjoy the amusement of shooting over them. I replied, that as I knew Lord W. (the duke's son), I had no doubt, if I wrote to him, that he would instantly send me the necessary permission.—You might have perceived, my dear Augustus, the effect that a single word produces in England which intimates that the speaker has connexion, however slight, or even acquaintance, with rank and title: I am nevertheless far from imputing to this motive the hospitality which I received a few days afterwards from the gentleman in question; I do not doubt that even without the name that I had just pronounced he would have invited me to his residence upon the summit almost of these hills: but still I fancied that from that moment, and ever afterwards, greater attention was offered to me.

I wrote to London on the morrow, and received my permission by return of post, with all the courtesy so invariably manifested in the higher class of Englishmen. The permission embraced the whole of the time that this shooting lasts: I will give you all its details in my next letter.

After dinner we all met in the neat little drawing-room, when we had the pleasure of hearing Mrs. D. play and sing, which she did with much taste: she possessed a very pretty voice, to which was added the charm of much personal attraction and great amiability. The Reverend Mr. D. was a descendant of an old Welsh family, which had formerly been very wealthy, and possessed a good deal of landed property in the very part in which Mr. D. now occupied only a modest cottage. During the evening he gave me many interesting particulars of the habits and peculiar customs of the ancient Welsh. It was impossible not to feel grateful for the unmerited kindness and politeness we had received; so

taking leave, we offered our sincere acknowledgments, resumed our places in the carriage at eleven o'clock at night, and enjoyed by moonlight the new beauty imparted to the landscape.

LETTER XV.

Assemblage of Sportsmen.—Ascent of the Hills.—Enthusiasm.—A novel Scene.—Infernal Region.—Pleasures of Sporting.—A Shooting Party.—The favourite Pointer.—The Game started.—Grouse.—A Sportman's Luncheon.—Night after Shooting.

EVERYTHING was arranged beforehand for our party of grouse-shooting. Mr. H.'s house was situated just in the very middle of the moors over which we were to shoot. Increasing in kindness every time I saw him, he offered me a bed, and pressed me to go the evening before the great day, (the 12th of August,) to be ready by dawn to begin the work of destruction. For some days past the little inn at Crickhowel had been filled with sportsmen, coming from sixty and even a hundred miles' distance to take their share in this pleasure; and as in Wales, as well as in England, all know

how to turn to advantage every opportunity of making money, the good landlady, my guardian friend, had increased her demands tenfold, and asked a guinea a day for a lodging; and such a bed! such a room! — there was, indeed, quite a commotion in the whole neighbourhood.

On the evening of the 11th August, I set out for Mr. H.'s on horseback, accompanied by a guide, who carried my warlike ammunition. We had to pass very near the residence of Mr. D. on whom I called to present my respects, and to receive his friendly wishes for "good sport;" and then we began our ascent of the hills just under which his house is situated. The sun was sinking below the horizon, the day was closing in, and as we continued to climb by rugged and winding paths, we found vegetation decreasing at every step: when we had gained about half the ascent, not a tree was to be seen, nothing but a few brambles intermingled with tufts of heath. At last, when we had attained the summit, I again turned round, as I had done at least twenty times during our route, to take a

glance at the country extended at my feet: the great height gave us the command of an extent of country bounded only by the horizon. I could then well imagine the enthusiasm of a poet; and under the inspiration of the moment, even I, who have never composed a line of poetry in my life, might have sent you an ode composed on this "dizzy height." The magnificent scene presented itself to the eye through a rosy-tinted vapour, whose colour was freshly caught from the sun, now set in a brilliant, golden cloud. Perhaps I should have tried to give expression to that inward emotion which makes the pulsations of the heart increase in rapidity as nature appears under its grandest aspect, causing an almost involuntary shudder at the idea that the Creator is there! that you are really in his presence.

It must, indeed, have been very fine, very imposing, for I had at that moment forgotten the sport, the grouse, and even my poor guide; who, leaning on his staff, was far from partaking my enthusiasm, and who quietly observed to me, that it was late, and that if night came

on before we had got into the beaten track, he could not answer but that we should fall into one of the many quagmires that were spread over the expanse now before us, and that I must attentively follow in his footsteps. We had still about half a mile to mount, but the ascent was no longer very steep.

On gaining this last height, a perfectly novel scene offered itself to my view. It was now almost dark. The smiling, brilliant horizon, where I had seen the sun set so gloriously, was no longer discernible; but now before me was a sky red with the reflection of fire—a mile or two before us was a village in flames! —at least, so I imagined, until I was undeceived by my guide replying to my exclamation, with an air of indifference, "The iron-works, sir, that's all,—they belong to Mr. H." It was so in fact; and from the mouths of immense forges and furnaces, and from the chimneys of enormous steam-engines, issued the flames and rolling masses of smoke which thus lighted up the whole sky, and the space which was between us and the village, with an appearance of

fire. We continued to advance; and, on approaching nearer, the light was so brilliant, that although it was now quite night, we could perfectly distinguish the nature of the ground over which we were walking.

We now rejoined the high road, and soon arrived at our destination. Fancy yourself at such an hour in the very heart of all these burning furnaces, and amidst numbers of buildings whose interiors seemed on fire, through which you could distinguish figures moving about, quite red with the brightness of the flame, and more resembling demons than anything else. Imagine the regular noise of the steam-engines, the roaring of the enormous bellows which they put in motion, whose powerful action seemed to make the air tremble, and which put me in mind of Vesuvius grumbling and threatening an eruption!

In about another quarter of an hour, having left behind us this representation of the infernal regions, I found myself in a charming, quiet habitation, seated in the dining-room between Mr. H. and a friend of his, also a sportsman,

having before me two cold chickens, a *ternue de Nerac*, and in my hand a glass of hock! If ever I publish my memoirs, I shall call that day, the day of contrasts. I am writing to as real a sportsman as I am myself—to one who has often partaken with me of its emotions and pleasures; I shall therefore spare you none of its details,—I shall endeavour to transport you quite close to me, to give you a shot at one of those superb birds, and join in all that took place for this desired end.

Explain to me, if you can, why one never grows too old for this recreation;—why does the expectation, the desire, the success, cause always the same intense pleasure? Philosophers tell us that we tire of everything—of honours, riches, glory; that an uniformly happy life becomes insipid; that one tires even of loving! But they did not comprise the pleasure of a sportsman in this enumeration; and if they had dared to do so, I would have presented myself as their champion, "*à l'outrance envers et contre tous.*" When we are going out shooting on the morrow, we can think of no other subject

the evening before, and are as much engrossed by it at forty years of age, as at thirty or twenty. On retiring to one's room, one looks with complacency at the great shooting-jacket, the leathern gaiters, the strong shoes, the coloured neckcloth, which are all spread out upon the arm-chair near the bed, prepared for the morning; one takes a glance at the gun-case which is already open, the spring of the powder-flask is tried, and the double-barrelled Manton inspected; and when at last in bed, it is only after two hours' restless turning about, thinking or half dreaming of dogs pointing—of hares, pheasants, partridges getting up, that one falls asleep to awake an hour or two before the usual time, when on darting out of bed and rushing to the window one exclaims, "Fine weather, delightful! Why does not the servant come with the hot water? how lazy those rascals are!" forgetting that it is only yet five o'clock, and that those "rascals" are still reposing, for *they* rise to labour instead of to go out shooting.

Well, now, then you shall be a spectator of

our excursion. Here we are, five of us, walking in a line, with an interval of fifty paces between us, and advancing slowly over these extensive moors, where not a single tree is to be seen: they are divided by valleys and hills, and entirely covered with heath, excepting in those places where masses of rock show their irregular, barren forms. There are, perhaps, a dozen parties such as ours scattered about: we hear occasionally in the distance their shots, repeated by the echoes from the valleys; but we rarely meet any of them, as the space we are traversing is very great. We are escorted by several horsemen, who are upon the neighbouring elevations: their occupation is to reply to the cry of "mark! mark!" by keeping in view any bird which may have escaped a shot, or which may have risen without having been shot at, and marking the spot where it may have taken refuge.

Mr. H. has brought his two brace of pointers into the field. All four are exactly alike, of a jet black; they are slight and high in form,

and each muscle and tendon is strongly marked in their rapid motions. Although all are excellent, Mirza is her master's favourite; she generally takes the lead, and it is on her that her three companions seem to have the greatest reliance. See! the very instant that their subtle sense of smelling has seized the slight odour which they follow with so much ardour, their step has become suddenly slow and measured, exhibiting their suppleness and caution: it is like the velvety pace of a cat advancing on her prey. Mirza stops abruptly; her head is raised, her long muscular tail becomes stiff and stretches out horizontally; it is no longer a living creature that you see, but the emblem of immobility. The other three dogs stop also as if struck by an electric power, and all remain equally motionless, with their eyes fixed on her. We maintain the same profound silence, and nothing is heard but the keeper's or master's "*take heed, take heed,*" pronounced slowly and in a low voice. A sign is made to me to approach; for Mr. H. in his undeviating courte-

sy, offers to me as a stranger the chance of the first bird that the dogs have found.

As I had never yet seen this species of game, I was boiling with impatience to see it rise. Mirza's head indicated on which side it was, with ten others, perhaps, all lying squatted down under the heath at some paces from me. I was so near Mirza, that I could see her eye, which, though fixed, seemed to emit sparks of fire. The almost imperceptible movement of the nostrils showed how acutely sensible they were to the smell which the air brought them: the organ of destruction showed itself in all its characteristics on this head. All at once a rustling sound like that of a cannon-ball passing is heard; it is the grouse taking wing, uttering her cry of distress,—a short low note, repeated two or three times; then the shot,—the bird falls, and the four dogs disappear in the furze. Not a word is pronounced, no one moves, for the least motion might make the other grouse rise before I could reload my gun; and these admirable dogs had learned and understood the lesson,

for they were all lying flat and without motion on the earth. You may conceive that it was with some difficulty I conquered my impatience (pleased and proud as I was of not having missed my first bird) to possess in my own hands, to see with my own eyes, this sort of game, so celebrated in the chronicles of sporting in England! But there was also a kind of pleasure in submitting oneself to the rules of a shooting-party thus directed; so I waited until it was permitted me to satisfy my longing. At present I will only mention that it is the gamekeeper who picks up the game, while one reloads.

This scene was repeated twenty times during the day, not only for the single birds, but for packs also; which, in rising from under the dog's feet, received the successive shots of the whole party, leaving frequently half a dozen birds on the ground. The grouse is about twice the size of a partridge: it resembles greatly the *gelinotte* of the German forests; but the plumage is thicker and much darker—the legs

also are covered with feathers. The very wild character of this bird—the noise and rapidity of its flight—the height of the regions it inhabits, and where it must be sought, render this shooting very interesting and peculiar.

You know what an appetite such a day as I have described produces; therefore, notwithstanding the ardour with which we followed our sport, it was with no small pleasure that we listened to Mr. H.'s proposal to stop for our luncheon. We had been followed at a little distance by a led-horse, loaded not only with powder and shot in case of need, but with those other provisions so necessary after seven or eight hours' hard walking over prickly furze and bogs, in which we sometimes sank knee-deep. I had observed the disappearance of this horse and the man who led it about half an hour before with inquietude; but Mr. H.'s speech reassured me. The place of rendezvous was a hut most romantically situated on a steep descent into one of the valleys of which I have before spoken: it was used as a shelter for the duke's gamekeepers when surprised by storms, and for

warmth in winter. It was in this place that the provisions were deposited; and in order to get in, we were obliged, with our guns over our shoulders, to descend one at a time a staircase roughly hewn out of the rock. This was not unlike a scene in a melodrama.

The brilliant brushwood fire that we found in the hut was highly welcome, as it served to dry our clothes, our shoes and boots, &c. I particularly stood in need of it, for I had twice refreshed myself very involuntarily in two of the bogs, with which my guide the night before had threatened me. You would have laughed to see us, bare-legged, with our toes stuck up in the air to avoid any contact with the cold hard stones with which the hut was paved, seated round a clumsy table, eating without plates, spoons or forks, armed only with knives, and drinking beer out of an earthen jug which passed round the table. A few drops of excellent whisky (whose genial influence reached even to our feet) completed our repast; and with renewed strength and spirit we continued our sport until sunset.

Adieu, my dear Augustus. If the expectation of pleasure deprives one of seven hours' rest the night before the opening of grouse-shooting, surely the compensation follows on the night after, for I never slept so soundly in my life.

LETTER XVI.

End of Grouse Shooting.—A new Acquaintance.—Friendship.—Presentiments.—An Accident.—My Wound.—Timely Assistance.—Letter to my Family.—Arrival of my Wife.—Our Interview.

"WHAT!" you cry, "another letter on Wales!" But, my friend, since I took you there, I have only spoken of magnificent views, interesting remembrances, agreeable repasts, and the pleasures of shooting. Now I have the sombre side of the picture to show you,—justice must be done; so I resume the course of my history.

After returning several times to these mountain heights, always finding there my friend Mr. H., his kindness, and his black dogs, the grouse-shooting ended, as all things in this world

must do. Still the thought that the 1st of September was approaching, with its hares and its partridges, was some consolation to me. Besides, I had lately made an agreeable acquaintance. I had gone one morning to the lake, situated about a mile from our little villa, and, getting into a fisherman's boat, made him row me to the middle of the water to enjoy the view of the hills which surrounded it. On remarking a little sailing-boat which was tacking about not far from us, I asked the fisherman to whom it belonged. He replied, to Mr. P. the son of Sir W. P. a young man of twenty-seven or twenty-eight years of age at the utmost, who had established himself a few months previously in a house upon the borders of the lake, where he lived in complete retirement, avoiding all acquaintance, and had only two servants with him. He added, that he thought he must be an invalid; for although he seemed to be very fond of fishing and sailing, still he was often a fortnight without quitting his house.

In this account there was enough to excite curiosity and even interest: I immediately wished to see him and to be acquainted with him; and it was with pleasure that I perceived the little bark approaching us, its large sails outspread, and indicating by the manner it was managed the experienced hands of a master. He came right upon our boat, and in an instant we were side by side. Bowing politely, he said, that as soon as he had heard of our arrival, he should immediately have called to offer his respects and services, had he not been prevented by indisposition; and that he hoped I would excuse the present unceremonious manner of introducing himself. I replied, that he could not have chosen a more amiable or agreeable one, particularly for a foreigner. In another minute he invited me into his boat; and leaping in, I dismissed my fisherman and his histories. Taking advantage of the wind which was beginning to rise, he again set sail, and we glided rapidly over the lake, sometimes leaning to one side, sometimes to

the other, according as we took the breeze or changed our direction.

I was quickly aware that I was in good society. My companion was pale; but his was not that pallidness which is the result of dissipation,—which certain men are proud of possessing, and which is attributed to this cause wrongfully in others, whilst it is simply the effect of delicate health or moral suffering. (You smile, and I know the reason of that smile.) My new acquaintance was in ill health; in this respect my fisherman had told me the truth; and this also was the cause of his having retired from the navy.

Mr. P. was one of the few that I have met with who immediately inspired me with a feeling of confidence and ease,—with whom I felt a sympathy of taste, of feeling, and opinion, and who appeared to be actuated by the same motives and sentiments. These are the secret ties which more than any other attract and attach, giving birth to an affection which is more real than one formed perhaps

from the performance of great services or sacrifices, but unsustained by such characteristics. Shall I go farther,—shall I say that there are many persons who appear as if they were ready to die for you, and really would do so; and yet that for them nothing but gratitude is felt? You cannot make them your friends, for friendship disdains payment—it will neither be bought nor sold. A more satirical pen than mine might perhaps add, that it is in this point that friendship differs from and is superior to love.

"When Mr. P. and I parted, we fixed our next meeting for the 1st of September, when we were to begin shooting together over his ground and my own. I went home, and after giving an account *à qui de droit* of the agreeable acquaintance that I had just made, and of his kind offer of lending us the small but select collection of books which he had with him in his retirement, I went into the garden to finish the work I had commenced there,—doubly interesting to me, from its exercising the vulgar taste which you know I

possess for gardening and carpentering, as well as serving as a security for my children; for I was busy erecting a rustic barrier at the edge of a ditch into which they might have fallen.

Am I a fatalist or not? If I have more than once laughed and shrugged up my shoulders at the idea of some misfortune falling on me, I have more than once been surprised in the very midst of that smile by a sudden *serrement du cœur* which is inexplicable. Is it not this which we call a presentiment, if something unfortunate happens afterwards? Whilst working at my railing in the garden, I had to cut off a knot in the wood; in doing which I opened my arm with my knife so as to lay bare all the tendons of my left wrist. Fortunately the cut ran in their direction; and although deep and bleeding copiously, I managed to wrap it in my handkerchief, and stop the blood, until the servant, who was sent off in a great hurry, returned with a surgeon from Brecknock. He dressed the wound, little

imagining that he would soon have to render me much more serious services. Would you believe it? four days after, I was shooting again with my arm in a sling, and using only my right hand. Although my wound was not quite healed, it no longer gave me pain; and yet in dressing myself in the morning I had felt some darting stings, followed by the sudden *serrement du cœur* at which I had smiled and shrugged my shoulders; also the same sensation when I passed through the garden-gate, pushing it close with the elbow of the wounded arm. Your old friend Palma, my faithful pointer, instead of her usual frisks at the sight of her master with a gun in his hand, followed with her eyes sadly fixed on me. I am far from pretending to have foreseen what happened to me, but of this I am certain,—that I did not feel that elasticity of limb or vigour of mind that I usually experience in the early morning air, and particularly when I am going out shooting. Mr. P. had had the kindness to call on me the day after my slight accident,

and had assured me he would not go out until I was able to partake of the sport with him: he was surprised at my arrival, and laughingly praising what he called my resolution,—rather, my mania for shooting,—he quickly prepared to accompany me.

In this Principality, as well as in England, the fields are divided by hedges and shut in by gates. Every five minutes you are obliged to push through the first, or to pass over the second, which are generally fastened. Until now, Mr. P. had always had the kindness to take my gun whilst I made my passage either through the hedge or over the gate, on account of my arm, which was in a sling. At last we arrived at a five-barred gate, over which he had passed the first. Not liking to impose on his good nature, I refused his reiterated offer of holding my gun, and passed it over the gate, resting the butt-end on the ground. It was uncocked. How it happened I know not,—whether in putting my foot on the first bar, half my body leaning over, I

touched one of the triggers which falls on the cap, or how, I know not,—but it went off. I fell back stunned: the only sensation I felt was a sort of buzzing in the head. Palma, who on my falling sprang on me, restored me to recollection by her repeated caresses. I rose and looked to discover where I was wounded. The blood was streaming from the right shoulder: the muzzle of the gun had been so near me at the time of explosion, that the shot had passed like a ball through my arm; the edges of the horrible hole which I perceived in my jacket were burnt as if by fire and were still smoking! I tried to move—to lift the arm; I felt that I had the power of doing so: I forgot all danger, I thought only of the mercy of God in preserving me to my wife and children.

Mr. P. remained motionless, as pale as death. I entreated him to run to his own house, and send some one on horseback for the surgeon from Brecknock (eight miles off); for suddenly the idea came over me that I should die of hemorrhage, the blood flowed with such violence. He

was thus obliged to leave me alone; and telling me that he would immediately send some one to my assistance, he departed at full speed. I heard him screaming and hallooing to the different labourers he saw in the neighbouring fields; but none appeared to understand his wishes, for none came to my aid. I had to climb over the fatal gate and then to walk about half a mile before I could reach Mr. P.'s house. I got on as well as I could; I felt myself weaker at every step, but still my courage did not fail me. In passing through two or three farms, some women who perceived me immediately took to flight, screaming loudly from fear. My weakness increased rapidly; I lost so much blood, that I had no longer the strength necessary to pursue my way; when fortunately, at a small distance from these farms, a man who was working on a hay-rick, near which I was staggering, saw me, and immediately sliding himself down from the height, came to me, for he had been a soldier, he said, and "the sight of blood did not frighten him."

Aided by this good fellow, I was able to continue my route; but when within a few hundred steps of Mr. P.'s gate, (where I met the gardener, who was just coming to me,) everything seemed to turn round, and I fainted. It was only after two hours of stupor that I was restored to recollection. I found myself upon Mr. P.'s bed; his good old housekeeper was by my side,—joyfully did she tell me that the blood had at last ceased to flow! I entreated her to give me the means of writing a few words to send home, for there turned my first thought. An accident of this kind is always related with so much exaggeration, that I feared a report, perhaps of my death, might reach my family. Thanks to God! I was able to write a few lines, and I declared on my honour it was with the wounded arm that I wrote!

The surgeon arrived about three hours after the accident; I will not enter into a detail of all that ensued: suffice it to say, that the surgeon, on examining the wound with his pitiless finger, (for such I could not help feeling it,) expressed

great surprise at the direction which the charge had taken; he called it almost miraculous; for had it deviated but by a quarter of an inch higher, it must either have broken the joint of the shoulder or its socket; or else, if lower, it would have cut through the principal artery, and death must have followed in a few minutes, unless surgical assistance could have been instantly procured! After my imprudence, did I merit this protection?

Soon was heard the noise of carriage-wheels; you guess who arrived; my wife came to seek me, and you may imagine also what were my emotions at this moment! What a shock, what agony, must she have experienced! and now to meet me in this state! The profound gratitude with which my heart was filled towards God for my preservation, and which I felt the stronger from the firm conviction that my life was precious to her who thus hastened to me, all this was enough to agitate the firmest heart, and mine beat so that I could hardly breathe! However, everything had been arranged so as to remove as much as

possible all appearance of immediate danger; I had quitted Mr. P.'s room, my wound had been dressed, my kind host had furnished me with clean linen, not a spot of blood even, to alarm, and I was seated on the sofa, when the door opened! My letter had been in time: one of those fortunate inspirations, produced alone by real and true affection, had caused me to write it, and enabled me to disregard, whilst I wrote, the acute pain caused by the motion of my hand.

Adieu!

LETTER XVII.

Departure from Wales.—Young Female Mendicant.—Law in England.—English Prosperity.—Torquay.—Fishing-boats.—Extensive View.—Lovely Cottage.—Vain attempt.

After reading the contents of my last letter, you will not be astonished to find me speaking of our departure from Brecknockshire. My determination, however, did not arise from any apprehensions about the cure of my wound, or in consequence of any want of talent in the young surgeon who attended me: on the contrary, I can speak with gratitude and praise of the care and attention I received from Mr. Pendrill, the only person whose name I shall mention in full in these letters, and that from the melancholy reason that he is no more; for I have since learnt, and with great regret, that

this unfortunate young man was killed by a fall from his horse as he was going one night to the assistance of a poor man who had wounded himself. Such are the decrees of Providence! He lost his life by an act of generosity whilst performing the duties of his calling, whilst I——

Family reasons, which it is needless to mention, caused us to quit Wales; we made the tour round by Cheltenham, but our final object was to reach Devonshire, which I would name the Garden of England, as Italy is called that of Europe.

Soon after my wound, when I had permission to get out again into the garden, my arm and shoulder still wrapped up in I know not how many bandages, I perceived a young girl of the most wretched appearance who was just entering the house-door; the rooms on the ground-floor all opened to the garden by windows down to the ground; she asked charity, and as I had no change in my pocket, I went in to get some food, she looked so poor

and miserable! When I returned, she had disappeared; a few hours afterwards, a silver spoon was missed from the little travelling plate-box standing in one of the rooms. I immediately suspected that it had been taken by this young beggar, for whom I had experienced so much compassion: one of our servants offered to try to obtain some information about it; and ascertained that the spoon had already been sold, or rather pawned, to an old woman of no very brilliant reputation. I wrote to the gentleman who acted as magistrate, giving him all the necessary particulars; his reply was, that the case was a serious one, and that to recover the stolen goods, I must make a formal accusation, which if proved would hang the girl, and cost me twenty or twenty-five pounds. I would much rather have given this sum to save any poor wretch from the gallows: and regretting to learn that it is not always the public authority which pursues crime in England, but that it is the sufferer who must pay for the judicial act which ought to protect him, I willingly gave

up my silver spoon, feeling even thankful for the moderation of the poor thief, who might just as easily have carried off the box itself, or all its contents, as the single spoon.

It now becomes a debt of gratitude to mention once more my friends, Mr. P. and the good clergyman. You may suppose the apologies and thanks I had to make to the first, for the fright, fatigue, and inconvenience I had caused him in his quiet retreat, and also for all those kind attentions which had never relaxed during my convalescence. Mr. D. had also been most attentive at my departure, he prayed God to bless me; and, heartily shaking hands with both of them, I took my departure.

The distance from Cheltenham into Devonshire is about one hundred and sixty miles, crossing the whole of the counties of Gloucester and Somerset. It was at about thirty miles from Cheltenham that we stopped to visit Berkeley Castle, in which I have already conducted you from chamber to chamber; and from the height of whose platform we enjoyed a view of ex-

quisite beauty: we saw the Severn, the widest river in England, emptying itself into the Bristol Channel; we had not long before been travelling on its banks. It was no longer the romantic and wild scenery of Wales, where Nature alone exhibits her power and beauty; we were again in England, with all her riches, her smiling verdure, and her astonishing activity. Again we passed her thousands of habitations, her country-seats, her farms, her villages; again, at each step, we observed her admirable works of industry—all that art or science invents or improves, each day discovering some new power in invention. Here, a bridge suspended in air! Farther, an arched road passing under a hill! or the hill itself has disappeared; it is actually cut down by labour, and the enormous masses of earth gained from it have been transported into the valley to elevate the road, which descended too steeply! Here is a canal; there a railway!

I stop myself, my dear Augustus, just in the midst of my fine description, and do you know

why ?—Because I caught myself laughing at my own words. I fear I may have allowed myself to be carried away by the warmth of my admiration; not that all that I have described, and much more, does not really exist in England, but it struck me that perhaps it may not all be exactly united on this very road that I have just described. Nevertheless, having met with and admired it all a hundred times in my different tours through England, my admiration and pleasurable recollections remain well-founded and unalterable: and if, in my enthusiasm, I have placed a bridge or a railway upon one road, which belongs to another, it is more than probable that on this very road which I have so embellished I have neglected to mention, or perhaps passed without seeing, or even being aware of their existence, objects still more curious or important; so that, if I deserve a reproach on this subject, it is not that of exaggeration in favour of this country, but rather of ignorance of her numerous advantages and resources!

Devonshire is situated between the Bristol and the English Channels; and it was to the shore of the latter that we bent our steps, to a little town called Torquay, hidden amongst high rocks, at the centre of a bay called Torbay. You know that, in all places of this kind in England, one is almost always sure of finding a ready-furnished house to let, either in the town or in its immediate environs; therefore, in two or three days, we were again installed in the prettiest dwelling imaginable, situated about two hundred feet above the level of the sea, upon the rock or hill behind which I told you Torquay has sheltered itself from the storm and tempest. There we found everything necessary for a comfortable small establishment in a country-house, or rather I should call it a *pavillon*, for it was all on one floor, no staircase whatever: it had a pretty garden filled with flowers, its walls covered with fruit-trees. The walk, or short drive, from the gate up to the house, is bordered with beds filled with a profusion of roses and carnations; the hall, ornamented with flowers in pots,

was paved in marble; the windows of the two sitting-rooms opened to the lawn, at the end of which was a precipice, or rather very steep slope, which descended to the sea; a hedge, placed some feet lower down, (but which did not interrupt the view,) protected the garden on this side.

The view commanded the greater part of the bay, (five miles in width,) and the hills which surround it. On the opposite side we could see Brixham harbour, from which place, every day, numerous boats loaded with fish depart for London, to supply its fifteen hundred thousand stomachs. The imperious wants of that immense city have established almost an exclusive right to the fishing all along this coast, called the southern; which comprehends, besides Devonshire, Dorsetshire, Hampshire, Sussex, and Kent, situated to the left of Devonshire, and Cornwall to the right, at whose extremity is the Lizard's Point, the promontory so well known by the English sailor, and to which he turns his last look, and makes his

last farewell, when sailing for another world. As to this right of fishing, as I may call it, exercised by London, I have termed it exclusive, because we, the inhabitants of Devonshire, under whose feet (I might say under whose noses) almost all these fish were taken, could with difficulty procure any choice for our tables!

I now return to my lawn, so fresh and green! the source of such enjoyment to the children in their races; from thence, leaving Brixham to the left, and following with the eye the rounded shores of the bay, you perceive the pretty village of Paynton, and nearer Torquay, coming out from its fine back-ground of large trees, Tor Abbey, the seat of Mr. Carey, of an old Roman Catholic family. (A chapel consecrated to this belief is regularly served there every Sunday.) I told you that we were about two hundred feet above the sea; but behind us the hill rose considerably higher, and was crowned by the pleasure-grounds of a lovely cottage which a lady had built a few years previously.

Her first intention had been to secure herself a very simple retirement in the middle of a small garden; but she had altered, and increased, and purchased, until she had expended a very large sum of money. Even in England I have rarely seen any place more complete, more perfectly furnished, and in better keeping than this place. Midway up the ascent, the cottage, for so she modestly designated it, with its thatched roof, contained apartments of the greatest elegance; it was built in the ancient style of Elizabeth's reign, and seven or eight gardeners were daily employed in the little garden, now grown almost into the size of a park. The house was surmounted, on the highest point of the hill, by a, sort of meadow or lawn, which she liberally left open to whoever wished to enjoy the admirable spectacle which presented itself from thence to the delighted eye in every direction; it commanded not only the view of the lovely bay entirely, but also, to the left, the ocean, and a length of coast for twenty miles.

It was from this spot, my dear Augustus, that often with a telescope I sought to descry France in the distance! It was excusable to dream for a moment that I might perhaps distinguish the port of Cherbourg, which is the nearest point to England in this part. Adieu! my friend.

LETTER XVIII.

Sounds at Daybreak.—View of the Ocean.—Visit to the Dart.—Our Boat.—Dinner.—Right of Fishing.—Dartmouth.—A Surprise.—English Roads.

You will recollect that you left me near Torquay, perched like a sea-gull on the summit of one of the rocks which surround it. A magnificent bay extended at my feet, and this in the county the most celebrated for its picturesque sites, its mild climate, and pure atmosphere; and so you will be able to form some idea of the many occasions I had of enjoying Nature in all her splendour. How often have I been awakened at break of day by the song, or rather the cadenced cry, of the sailor whilst weighing the anchor, hoisting the yard, or

spreading the sail! The window of my bedroom commanded a view of the bay: whenever I heard these sounds, I ran to open it, to breathe the fresh and balmy morning air, and to turn my eyes to the point whence these half-harmonious sounds proceeded. Sometimes they came from a merchant-brig making ready for departure; sometimes from the yacht of a young lord, who does not spend less than ten or fifteen hundred pounds a-year to indulge this fancy, and who perhaps had arrived the night before, and was already preparing to be off again. At other times, instead of the cries of the sailors, I was aroused by the sound of a bagpipe coming from the same direction. In this case the yacht belonged to a Scotchman, and the preparations for departure were concluded to the sound of his national instrument. From my window I could perceive the costume of the highlander, who, walking the deck with measured steps, awoke the echoes of the surrounding hills, and made them resound with his martial or plaintive tones: I could

even plainly distinguish the quickness of every naval manœuvre.

Half an hour later I had climbed the hill behind us (the lady's); and pushing on to the extremity of the upper plain above her grounds, and in another direction, I would find myself at twice the former elevation, on the edge of a cliff commanding a view of the wide ocean. Already the yacht had gained some miles on its way, already she had reached the open sea, already spread all her sails, and her elegant form was balancing on the vast and restless element! There is something sad as well as sublime in the enjoyment of such a spectacle. Is it the impression made by the grandeur of the ocean, the recollection of its terrible power during the tempest, the ravages which its anger can produce, mingled with the idea of its occasional tranquillity, when, as now, lighted by a brilliant sun, it rolls its majestic waves upon the shore, spreads, and then withdraws them to its own bosom? Or was it, perhaps, the feeling of my own weakness, of my own insignificance,

when compared with all this splendour, that caused the melancholy which blended with my admiration?

But soon we commenced more distant excursions, sometimes on horseback, sometimes in a carriage, and often on foot. One of our first, and one of the longest, was a visit to the Dart, a pretty river which gives its name to Dartmouth, a town situated at its mouth, beyond and to the right of Torbay. Therefore we were obliged to pass by Torquay, then behind Tor Abbey, (pardon all these Tors,) through the pretty little village of Tor which joins it. The road then turns to the right; and we continued it as far as Totness, a small town on the Dart, about sixteen or eighteen miles from its mouth. Our plan was to take a boat there, in order to descend this pretty river to Dartmouth, to which place I sent the carriage by a shorter road to meet us.

Do not fear a long and romantic description of all that we saw in our descent of the river. You must be contented with a simple

party of pleasure, composed of two little girls, the eldest scarcely four years old; their nurse, who held the youngest on her knee almost all the time; their mamma and papa; and, in addition, two boatmen: these few persons were placed in a spacious boat with a single mast and sail, which was occasionally filled by the wind when the numerous sinuosities of the river allowed it to find a passage through the wall of rocks, or the high trees, which border its shores. At times the two boatmen aided our progress by means of their long poles, which easily reached the bottom of this clear stream, down which the current took us swiftly and tranquilly along.

Half an hour sufficed to leave far behind us Totness and its inhabitants; and, having gained the peaceful solitude of this charming river, we spread a clean napkin, and the cold provisions which had been prudently brought with us in the carriage. Our boatmen, but little accustomed to being invited to dinner by a gentleman, and especially by a lady, were offered a share of

ours; a glass or two of Madeira imparted an additional expression of pleasure to their countenances, and these good fellows became more and more anxious to satisfy our curiosity about the country and its inhabitants, as we passed by the villas, the pleasure-grounds and lawns of which run sloping down to the river, rivalling each other in the taste and care with which they are laid out and kept up.

Some miles lower down, we perceived a boat fastened, and covered with nets; a man was seated in it, with his head leaning on his arms. Just at this place the river is narrower, the current more rapid, and the large trees, spreading their branches far over, almost entirely shade it. As we passed near the man, one of our boatmen called out, "Hollo, John, what is the matter? You look glum, my man."—"The devil take the river!" replied John; "I have caught but two fish this week, and to-morrow is pay-day." Saying "good day," with a wish for better luck, our boatman explained to us that the two fish of his friend

referred to two salmon, for which this river is celebrated; and that this poor fellow had hired the right of fishing of a colonel and M.P., (I think,) through whose property our boat was at that moment passing, for the sum of twenty guineas for the season, which he had to pay quarterly; and that with this honourable gentleman there was no remission,—"the rent or the gaol" had been the reply to poor John's application for a diminution of payment on account of the few salmon which the river had afforded that year.

My friend, I will leave you to make your own observations on this little history; out of which, if you choose, you may also fish a few new ideas. I will only add, that we regretted the jokes we had made upon the apparent ill-humour of the poor fisherman, particularly when we learnt that he had a numerous family to support.

Our course continued agreeable and interesting the whole way to Dartmouth. After having taken a view of the town and

its environs from a neighbouring height, which also commands a view of the sea in the opposite direction, I left my little company resting themselves, whilst I went in search of the carriage at the place of rendezvous given to the post-boy. Finding he had not arrived, I decided upon walking forward to meet him, little suspecting that he would have followed so rigidly my instructions of *walking* his horses round to meet us. At some distance from the town I saw a man standing near a cart loaded with planks, half upset into a ditch which was on one side of the road. Upon approaching nearer, I found that he was far advanced in years, and quite incapable of getting out of this hobble without assistance; I offered him mine, which he accepted civilly, but without any very apparent thankfulness. I advised him to take the planks out one by one from the cart, as the load was too heavy to move as it was; and, taking off my jacket, we both of us set bravely to work. As

soon as the horse felt himself more free, (it was a courageous little beast,) he made of his own accord an effort which at one pull dragged the cart out of the ditch; we then had to reload it, and just as we had replaced the last plank, and I was seated on the bank to take breath and to wipe my forehead, (for the exercise had been rather more than I had bargained for,) the noise of wheels were heard, the carriage drove up, and the post-boy perceiving me stopped, putting his hand to his hat. Immediately the man of the cart advanced, and, looking at me with the greatest astonishment, exclaimed, "What, sir, is this your carriage?"—"Yes, my good fellow, it is."—"And those arms painted on it, are they yours?"—"To be sure they are." "God bless you then, sir; I never thought a gentleman would help, in such a way, a poor old man like me."

After I had left him, I understood his surprise better, when I reflected how little con-

sistency there must have appeared in his eyes between the carriage and my dress when I offered to aid him. My jacket was an old shooting-garment which had seen its best days; and besides, as I had frequently quitted the boat during our row to examine the shore more nearly, a black layer of mud covered my legs, so that it is probable, had the post-boy delayed his arrival a few minutes longer, instead of the blessing, I should have received a shake of the hand, and a simple "Thank you, my friend," which would have amused me still more.

Now, if I have tolerably explained to you the direction we followed in our excursion, you will understand that we were on the right of Torbay, and were to take a different road before we could find again our penates. In a country where there are eight thousand leagues of excellent roads, crossing each other in every direction, one is never embarrassed on such an occasion. So we kept along the coast, following the line of hills all around

Torbay; and thus regained Torquay and our nest on the rock. *So much for the roads in England!*

I will leave you to translate that for yourself into French.

So, farewell.

LETTER XIX.

Coast of Devonshire.—Babicombe.—Elegant Cottages.—Sea View.—Teignmouth.—Bishops-Teignton.—Verdant Lanes.—Tradesmen's Carts.—Sequestered Villages.—The Peasantry.—Village Clergymen.—Pleasant Retirement.

In my last letter, I described a small portion of the country to the right of Torbay; to-day you will, if you please, accompany me to the left. The whole of this coast is composed of bays of different dimensions, of promontories, and of masses of rocks, advancing boldly into the ocean, forming in many places arches and spacious caverns supported by pillars. The noise of the waves breaking through and over them is exactly like the sound of distant cannon at sea. I often swam towards some that were near us, and my appearance only disturbed the divers or the sea-gulls, which quick-

into consideration the immense sacrifices which the rich have imposed on themselves for the support of the poor, perhaps to plead in excuse for this very luxury with which they are reproached, besides the tax of eight millions raised by poor-rates (a sum which surpasses the entire revenue of more than one Continental state). A still greater amount is distributed, and with cheerfulness, for the support of this unfortunate class; not only by subscriptions which are constantly renewed, even in the most inconsiderable towns and in villages, with anxious solicitude, forgetful of fatigue, but, what is most praiseworthy, by women of rank and education, who feel a generous interest in descending into all the details of the distribution of food, clothing, linen, flannel, medicine even, of which they have made a point of informing themselves sufficiently to enable them to complete their power of being useful to their miserable fellow-creatures.

There may exist some abuses (and where do they not exist?) in the administration of the parishes relative to their duties towards the

paupers which each is obliged to maintain and succour; but the general effort to protect and assist poverty and misery, is everywhere evident: and when I think of all that I have seen in this respect in England, of all that my own experience has made me acquainted with, I cannot but repeat to myself, "Yes; I have ample reason to admire this nation!"

After all, a man (however expensive his habits may be) cannot *de facto* disburse for himself alone such immense incomes as many possess; these expenses lead to the support and well-being of a number of people who depend on them, and of many others not immediately dependent: and I should like to know if there be a better manner of enjoying a large fortune than that of succouring the poor and miserable, and then nobly and grandly expending the rest?

I wish, my dear Augustus, that you had the opportunity of doing all this, for I am sure you also would make a good use of it.

Adieu; you will perhaps some day be of my opinion.

shore. Sometimes it ascended to the top of the hill, sometimes it descended into the very waves which were breaking at our feet. You already know that this shore is on the English Channel (the thoroughfare of all the vessels departing for the two Indies, and consequently for many other countries); therefore, near the coasts, or in the distance, there is always something interesting to see on the blue bosom of the ocean. Sometimes it is a vessel which the deceptive *mirage* elevates above the horizon, whilst the great distance gives its sails a vaporous appearance. Nearer the coast is the Government schooner, the British flag and signals displayed, cruising about like a bird of prey, in order to surprise and seize the smuggling vessels. Further on, you see the more modest barks of the fishermen, with their brown thick sails, dancing over the waves.

If the wind fall, and the sea become calm, reflecting on its glassy bosom the pure blue sky, then appears, perhaps, a ship of war with unspread sails, but with masts and rigging, whose

dark lines are clearly discerned on the bright horizon. It advances, towed by a steam-vessel; which, proud of thus dragging in triumph so redoubtable a mass, thrice its own size, appears insolently to trace the way which she has to follow by clouds of thick smoke, which seem to wait for the majestic ship in order to darken her passage.

Teignmouth is one of the numerous watering-places with which the southern coast is in a manner covered: I may say, without exaggeration, that along this great extent of sea-shore, you meet, every twelve or fifteen miles, with one of these small towns, and in each a repetition of the same conveniences that you have just left behind you;—everywhere neat and elegant hotels, and in the town everything that luxury could desire, or money procure; post-horses always ready, and even riding-horses; (thus we were mounted on our present excursion;) and not the *honteux locates*, but spirited animals, which certainly might have put to the blush many a steed in the *Bois de Boulogne*.

Just on arriving at Teignmouth, the road, after having attained the summit of the hill, suddenly changes its direction and turns to the left, to avoid the precipice, at the bottom of which the Teign empties itself into the sea. On the opposite bank, you perceive the town in perspective in a line with the shore along which you have just come, and which is interrupted by the river; you see its rows of houses and its promenade on the beach, where the waves are breaking. Then the road re-descends for about a quarter of a mile, passing through clumps of trees, and by some pretty farm-houses; and, when on a level with the river, again winds to the right over a very handsome bridge which crosses it.

Here we must stop: first, because there is always something to pay in England, as well as everywhere else, when you pass over a bridge built by speculation; with this difference, indeed, that there they are to be found in every direction, whilst in other countries they are of rare occurrence. But we stop for another reason

also; for at the end of the bridge, the road is divided into two branches, the right leading to Teignmouth, where, no doubt, you think I am going to take you; but you are mistaken, for it is the left we shall choose. So, satisfy yourself with the view of the town as I have given it from the top of my precipice; adding to the picture the lively colours of the parasols of some gay ladies, who were walking on the parade by the sea-side at the moment we were stopping to look at it.

Teignmouth had been, in one point of view, the object of our excursion; but there was a greater attraction in its neighbourhood for us, particularly for my companion: it was one of those wishes of the heart, one of those promptings of sentiment so difficult to resist, that of visiting the place which has been inhabited by one dearly loved, in order to seek recollections in which more of pain than pleasure is generally to be found. We came merely to take a glance at the retired spot where a sister, a cherished sister, a companion of childhood,—one with whom

the griefs and joys of that happy age had been participated,—had passed the first years of her marriage.

Bishops-Teignton, where this residence is situated, is one of those villages like which nothing is to be found on the Continent, and of which it is impossible to form a just idea; certainly not from those vapid pieces of poetry or those ridiculous novels, where the author puzzles his brain to describe charming cottages, adoring shepherds and shepherdesses, &c. Assuredly it requires a great warmth of imagination to be able to sing the loves of a village filled with manure, pigs running at liberty, and many other things which I dare not mention. But here, without fancy or poetry, I have simply to speak the truth.

Therefore we will, if you please, go together to Bishops-Teignton, taking that pretty road to the left, which disappears under the continual arch of verdure formed by the hedges on each side. I must here observe, that the county of Devon is remarkable from this peculiarity of

its covered roads, called lanes, by which the farms and villages have an easy and uninterrupted communication with each other. I have often traversed many miles thus, completely sheltered from the sun, under the impenetrable arbour which the hedges, smelling deliciously all the while, formed over our heads. Once, in particular, I recollect, when we were riding through the by-roads beyond Tor-Abbey, being more than an hour before we could find our way, having completely lost ourselves in one of these charming lanes.

Proceeding along the present, you will remark others crossing it; they are all in a good state of repair, all passable for carriages: and after half an hour's ride under the shelter of hawthorn and wild roses, we come into a wider road, bordered by shady and high trees. Casting your eyes behind the hedges which enclose it, you will see that the meadows, enamelled by flowers, are also all surrounded in the same manner; we are indeed in the very heart of *Verdant England!*

Now, look at that light two-wheeled cart on springs with one horse, going at an easy rapid trot; the driver, seated on a bench, touches his hat as he passes us. You will see many similar conveyances coming and going; and as at this moment I act the part of your cicerone, it is my business to tell you that these little carriages transport the daily provisions to all the country-houses in the environs; that they probably come from Teignmouth or some neighbouring town, and that the young men who are driving, and who bow to you so respectfully, are the different bakers', grocers', and butchers' boys, or perhaps even the masters themselves. Such people know in Devonshire, as well as in all other parts of England, how to profit by the advantages which the great number of good roads offers them, in order to extend their business, and to serve with ease to themselves the families who employ them; going about in this manner in every direction to receive orders, and even to execute them, in the same morning; and this in general with precision, *and without*

loss of time,—which appears to be the motto of the English people.

At one of the many turnings that we have taken, when we might rather have imagined ourselves in a park than in a cross-road, we perceive the entry of Bishops-Teignton. It comes on us by surprise, as indeed do most of the villages in England, when in the interior of the country, and far from the high-roads. They are like a bird's nest hidden in a bush, sheltered and tranquil. Nevertheless, the double row of fine trees is not interrupted, nor does the road cease its sinuous windings; so that, in seeing the first houses half hidden by the trees, the idea strikes you that the road was not made in order to reach the village, but that the village was attracted by its beauty, and had grouped itself on it and about it to enjoy its advantages.

Here, my dear Augustus, you will vainly look for negligence or dirt: you will find no abominable muddy gutter, no bank of manure heaped against the cottages, no broken panes

of glass in the windows filled up with dirty paper; no mass of stones, rubbish, and filth, upon which half-clothed and dirty-faced children are playing and rolling: you will find nothing of this. But cast your eye in passing into the interior of those pretty *chaumières;* observe (and hear me repeat, alas! what I so wish to see in the villages of my own country) the attractive neatness, the little windows ornamented with pots of flowers, the bright casement, the plain, but white curtain. The furniture is common, it is true; but does it not give you pleasure to see the order and care in which it is placed and kept? Every one has his little garden of some feet in size, surrounded with a fence, and with its little pathway often gravelled which leads to the door. A few houses of a superior appearance are intermixed with these humble dwellings, whose gardens are larger, and border the road which runs through the village. These furnish a still further proof of the attraction of the place, since people of some fortune choose it

as a residence, and pass their lives there. And this necessarily supposes a degree of education, good conduct, and morality, in the peasantry amongst whom such persons establish themselves.

Another advantage, which in my opinion cannot but result from this mixture of different ranks and fortunes, is the varied employments for the poor peasants, and the more certain assistance for those who may fall into indigence. You already know the generosity and extent of this assistance, if you remember the contents of one of my first letters where I spoke on this subject.

In the mean time we have left our horses at the little inn, whose neat and prepossessing appearance also struck you as we passed. Whilst going through the village, we met a gentleman, to whom every one bowed on passing; the women slightly courtesying, the men touching their caps or hats. You imagine it to be some great personage or rich landed proprietor; but here I have more experience

than you; under that simple dress, by that open countenance, those calm features, where the peace of a good conscience is so truly imprinted, I recognise the clergyman. I also have made way to let him pass; and, without asking myself why, I have imitated those countrymen in touching my hat as he went by.

Here I stop; for after having traversed the village, I will take you no further. The spot which we went to visit could only interest ourselves. I will add that it was very similar to many others I have met with in England, where the rich and the luxurious come to repose themselves after the fatigues of society. There were at least half a dozen houses of the same description in the neighbourhood of Bishops-Teignton. You will perhaps think I am joking when I tell you that behind a village hidden far in the country, and distant from the noise of the world, you will discover, when you least expect it, under a clump of thick trees, or behind a high hedge,

a cottage in the middle of a delicious garden: you ring, the door is opened by a powdered, silk-stockinged butler. The excellent dinner is served by domestics in handsome liveries; there are carriages, riding-horses, &c.; in fact, all the luxury and enjoyment which some thousands of pounds a year can procure for those who like to expend them in a cottage, whilst reposing from the fatigues of the gay world.

Adieu, my dear friend.

LETTER XX.

English Hospitality.—General M.—Yachting.—Water Excursion.—The General's Boat.—Fair Play.—Angling at Sea.—Luncheon on board.

My dear Augustus,

I have often mentioned the hospitality and kindness I have received during my different visits to England. In doing so, I render but a small portion of the debt of gratitude I owe. I have felt these distinctions the more from their being purely disinterested; for thanks have been all that I could give in exchange, and my only claim was that of a foreigner, being without any establishment or the least display of wealth; which (according to general opinion) are what attract the most attention from the English.

For instance, what good have I ever done, what service had I ever been able to render, to General M., who happened to be at Torquay at the same time we were, who with the most obliging attention came in search of us even to the top of our hill? And what in return had I to offer for his many kindnesses? Nothing but an arm-chair when he came to see us. I knew too well the decorum to be observed between gentlemen, particularly towards a man advanced in years, to venture to ask him to remain and partake of our dinner *sans façon*. This is rarely done in England.

Besides the very decided taste of the English, for fox-hunting, shooting, fishing, horse-racing, and many other sports less elegant,*

* I may say *vulgar* and cruel, such as boxing-matches, dog-fighting, bear and bull-baiting, combats between dogs and ferrets, cock-fighting, in which the spurs are armed with sharp iron. All these games induce betting in proportion to the class of fanciers and spectators, and is as ruinous to them as that made by higher classes.

there is one which I cannot pass in silence, for it appears to me quite characteristic of the country: it is that of going to sea for pleasure,—"yachting." This is one of the amusements of the upper class, and is considered very good style; but for this pursuit a large fortune is indispensable. Not only all pleasures of this kind are carried very far, and conducted on a very handsome scale amongst the rich, but they are all taxed highly, as is everything appertaining to luxury or fancy in England.

General M. went to Torquay every year during three summer months, in order to indulge himself in this pursuit:' yet he had nothing about him which gave the least indication of such a taste; at first sight you would never have thought he was a partaker in the gay life of which I have spoken. On the contrary, his dress and demeanour were simple, and his manners slightly reserved; everything in him rather announced the philosopher

than the fashionable sailor: at least, so he appeared to me in the excursions I had the pleasure of making with him in his boat.

His sloop,—for it did not amount in consequence to a yacht,—was renowned on the coasts for its elegant form, and for its fast sailing. The crew consisted of only four sailors and a boatswain, upon whom the entire management of the vessel devolved. The general took no part in it; he remained, on the contrary, comfortably seated in his arm-chair, with his newspapers, books, and telescope close to him: and, far from talking to me, as one might have expected, of ships, sails, winds, and tides, his conversation turned entirely upon literature, the arts and sciences, the resources of the country, &c.

One day he invited us to take a sail, and to lunch with him on board his boat; but the person for whom the party had been arranged was obliged to relinquish it on account of indisposition, so I arrived at the rendezvous with only my eldest child. The general, reckoning on the presence of a lady, had made some gallant

preparations; the sloop, still in port, had her colours and flags flying; the arm-chair this time was placed upon a carpet which covered the hind part of the vessel; and I remarked that there was an additional cushion on it. The sailors were in their white trousers, their many-buttoned blue jackets, and plaited straw hats.

Although the general appeared disappointed on seeing me arrive alone, he did not receive less kindly the compliments and excuses with which I was charged. He immediately took possession of my little girl; and, placing her in the arm-chair, he declared she should represent her mamma, and have all the honours of the day. He produced a box of bonbons, which quickly purchased her good graces. We soon left Torquay behind us; the bark at first was directed towards the centre of the bay, where, meeting a more constant wind, we veered to the left, and went out to sea. On passing before our rock, although we were at some distance, we could perceive the waving of a white

handkerchief on the lawn, in answer to the salutations we had made with our signals. What added to the interest of this scene for me, was the impatience, the anxiety, with which my little girl looked in the direction pointed out to her to see her mother, and her scream of delight when she perceived her. We were about doubling one of the high capes which advance just here into the sea; so we soon lost sight of the lawn.

A little while after this, the general, when speaking of the advantages which this bay offers during winter to the vessels continually passing, alluded to the time of war with France; when, he said, the English squadron cruising in the channel, and composed sometimes of twenty-five or thirty vessels, would come into this very bay for shelter against contrary winds and violent storms. "The spectacle," added the general, "of such a force was, doubtless, very fine as well as re-assuring; for you perhaps know" (this was said with a smile) "that there are few Englishmen whose hearts do not

swell with pride and pleasure when contemplating the majesty of a man-of-war; notwithstanding, I believe that the greatest part now prefer to see in place of those thirty ships of war, the two or three hundred fishing-smacks which, at this moment, so peaceably animate the scene around us, and proclaim by their number a state of tranquillity equally advantageous to the two countries."

Whilst he was thus speaking, we had quitted the bay and gained the open sea. There, setting full sails, our little vessel shot away with such rapidity that she seemed to fly over the surface of the waves. The general, hearing my exclamation of surprise, said that his boat was considered so good a sailer that they refused to admit her to try at the regatta which was held yearly at Torquay; at least, without he consented only to use a part of his sails, which he had always declined, as he said, "It would have been unfair for such a noble boat." By this expression the general did not mean to complain of the

decision taken with regard to his boat; he even thought it was just to a certain point. And in this I find a very original idea; and one, in my opinion, *very English*, that of endowing an inanimate, although perfectly finished object, with a species of sensibility, so as to fear to expose it to a disadvantage or unjust humiliation which might wound *its feelings*, as well as those of its owner!

This diminution of sails exacted in a boat-race for a boat whose sailing is acknowledged as superior, puts me in mind of the augmentation of weight imposed in horse-races upon horses whose superiority in speed, or strength of lungs on hilly ground, for instance, had gained the prize in former trials. In both of these cases, as in many others, is seen the care of the English to equalize as much as possible in every sport the rival strength and chances of success, and by these means to augment their own emotion and pleasure by the doubt which is often prolonged to the very last instant of the contest. But we will talk more upon

this subject when we make our appearance together on the turf of Newmarket.

I return to our excursion; the rapidity of our progress did not prevent our fishing; we were abundantly successful. No sooner did we drop our long lines with hooks into the sea at the stern of the vessel, than we saw them seized, stretched out and violently shaken, just as if the fish, who were taken, themselves gave the signal of their impatience to come on board. At one time it occurred so often, and so comically, that I could not restrain a hearty laugh, in which all the crew joined, and which even deranged the general's gravity.

My little girl was deprived of this amusement, which would have diverted her greatly, for the regular and gentle undulation of the waves had put her to sleep. She was lying on the deck where the men had arranged a bed with the cushions of the chair, and one of those large jackets of thick woollen with which they cover themselves on cold wet nights. It was impossible — at least for

me—not to be touched by the gentleness with which they deposited her on this bed of their own invention. During her slumber (which lasted two hours), all their care was to avoid, in their different manœuvres, hurting her, or even disturbing her repose in the slightest manner; so, when the general's back was turned, I seized the opportunity of begging them to drink to the health of their little *protegée*.

As to the luncheon, it had been prepared in such a way as to confirm me in my opinion that General M. combined a little of the epicure with the philosopher. Adieu, my dear friend.

Again, good-b'ye!

LETTER XXI.

Steam-boat.—Fellow Passengers.—A Comparison.—Illusions.—A Contrast.—Steam-boat at a distance.—The same at hand.—Disorderly Companions.

MY DEAR AUGUSTUS,

BUSINESS called me to London for a short time. A steam-boat plying between Portsmouth and Plymouth* passed three times a week, regularly entered the bay, and even came within a few hundred yards of the little port of Torquay, to take up passengers or goods. It was in this vessel that I proposed to go to Portsmouth, and take the stage or mail thence to London. I had passed at least

* The first of these ports is situated to the left, and the other to the right of Torbay. The distance between them is about one hundred and fifty miles.

fifteen or sixteen times between Dover and Calais, or Boulogne, also between Brighton and Dieppe ; but always in much smaller vessels, and what I might designate vessels *de bonne compagnie*, in comparison with the one now in question. It was, as they say in England, "quite another affair." On going on board, I found myself in company with from four to five hundred persons, generally seamen, going to rejoin their ships at Portsmouth, soldiers of every description, drummers, women who follow the camp, children, &c. Here, my good friend, there was no longer the obliging, attentive (and well-paid) steward ; such I had always met with in the boats I was accustomed to, where everything was so well calculated to add to the comfort of the passengers. From the moment that I put my foot on the Plymouth boat, I saw that I must make up my mind to pass the night on deck, in preference to descending by a sort of ladder into an obscure gulf whence proceeded clouds of tobacco-smoke, mixed with a horrible smell of

cooking; and, in such a hole, to go to bed upon a mattress by the side of the first chance companion who might offer.

I nevertheless remarked, that at the further extremity of the deck, behind and near the helmsman, there appeared a sort of retreat to which a few people of better appearance and quieter manners had retired. I also took refuge there; and once seated with my cloak drawn up to my eyes, I resolved on not moving or speaking until the morrow.

How many things there are in this world which are injured by being seen too closely or too fully! How much does their beauty or deformity depend on the point of view from which they are seen, and on the disposition of mind of him who contemplates them! It may appear absurd to make a comparison between a steam-boat and an opera-dancer; yet I think it may be done, and with some plausibility.

At the opera, in a box in company with pretty women, and under the influence of all

the illusions which are produced by brilliant toilettes, perfumes, delicious music, and the reunion of persons prepared and adorned with the nicest care, morally as well as physically, you no longer see, at least during some hours, the negligence, the coarseness, the vice, the misery, the brutality which render men more brutal than the beasts themselves. No, all this has disappeared; here we are purified, varnished, prepared "to be exquisitely polite" to each other,—it is indeed the very cream, the essence of humanity. You see nought but gracious smiles, you hear nought but compliments and flattering words, &c. Then, in the midst of this purified sphere, descends from the clouds, or issues from the centre of a bower, preceded by harmonious sounds, the dancer, a sylph-like being: her graceful and touching gestures speak; they express her despair, her melancholy, her tender recollections. They are so true to nature, they accord so well with the harmony of the orchestra, that you feel yourself moved, nay,

deeply affected, so much so as to be ashamed that your fair companions should witness your emotion; you therefore prefer appearing so little refined as to use a handkerchief (let it be a white silk one perfumed) for another purpose, rather than to dry the tear which has started to your eye.

But now the ballet is over: the curtain falls in the midst of applause upon the happy couple; for the heroine has recovered her lover, whom a remaining feeling of illusion makes you almost envy, "*Mauvais sujet que vous êtes.*" Now arm yourself with all your stoicism, and come: pass through the little door at the end of that dark passage; slip behind, taking care not to touch the side-scenes covered as they are with dirty, greasy painting, which at a distance you took for bowers, temples, limpid fountains, &c. Approach, look well at her, there she is!—"Where?" you cry.—Why, there, talking to Lord B. It is she—it is the charming creature who so delighted you a few minutes ago! Alas! now she

is motionless, without any other music than the yells of the workmen, without distance, without magic! She is chatting like any other woman. The thick coat of rouge which is spread over her cheeks, makes the paleness of her worn countenance but the more apparent. Those enchanting motions were only accomplished by great efforts, which studied grace concealed then, but which you divine at present, from her agitated breathing, from these swelled muscles of the neck, from her red and irritated skin! Ah! where is the innocence, the modesty, she depicted so well? Gone! gone! Farewell then to the sweet illusion! — farewell to the sudden tear! This time, if you take out your perfumed handkerchief, it is to overpower the smell of the lamps, it is to preserve your eyes from the clouds of dust which fly round you.

Now let us pass on to my steam-boat, — you see I am anxious to support my comparison. Look at it as I first saw it from the rocks above

Torquay. I was resting myself on one of those retired seats which Nature often prepares with apparent coquetry in solitary places, inviting you to repose, and admire in tranquillity and at your ease. Mine was a bank covered with moss, formed as if expressly in the rock, and upon the edge of a precipice, two hundred feet under which the sea was roaring. It was at sunset, and after a violent summer-storm; but all was now still, the waves alone were agitated. Just then appeared the steam-boat, arriving from Plymouth, and doubling Brixham Point to enter the bay. Without the least breath of wind, without oar or sail, she advanced rapidly over the waves, which she seemed to thrust behind her.

Here is the great difference, my dear Augustus, between this scene and that of the opera: there was no illusion, all that I saw was real, it was the triumph of art; one of the striking examples of obstacles surmounted, formerly thought physically insurmountable, but which man daily learns to overcome; and, in admir-

ing this, it was without illusion. But the comparison holds good when I speak of the distance from which I contemplated this spectacle, of the effect which that distance produced on the vessel seen *en masse*, and whose dark form was illuminated by the rays of the setting sun. The least imaginative being must have found interest in this picture, must have felt its grandeur!

Now let us change the scene for the fourth time: look at me on a later day on board this vessel, seated in a corner, rolled up in my mantle, for it rains, and the wind is cold. I am now occupied in viewing nearer this machine, this assemblage of objects, every part of which is blackened by smoke and coal-dust; the masts, the ropes, the deck, and the sailors who are employed on it,—their hands, their faces, everything is imbued with this dirty hue; and that crowd of people huddled together on the deck, the same who—when I saw them at a distance gliding over the waters as if by a supernatural power—had seemed to me like beings of a

superior order, whom the very elements obeyed, how miserably changed do they now appear! The greatest number, even the women, drinking, smoking, swearing, half-drunk with grog and brandy.

I here quit my comparison. Adieu! If ever chance should lead you to Torquay, be satisfied with the sight of the steam-boat from a distance.

LETTER XXII.

Morning at Sea.—Sunrise.—The Needles.—A fellow Voyager.—A Royal Captain.—Childish Prejudices.—Tom Cringle's Log.—French Soldiers.—Plymouth.—Royal Salute.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

AT daybreak you would still have found me crouched like a hare on its form; I had neither moved nor closed my eyes during the whole night. We were stopped for two hours, enjoying all the pleasure of rolling about in that abominable swinging motion produced by "the slow swelling of a silent sea." The paddles were motionless, and the whistling of the steam as it escaped from the safety-valve was the only sound to be heard. My too numerous travelling companions, principally those on the

other end of the deck, were all asleep. Their copious libations and tremendous noise had at last been followed by drowsiness and fatigue: at least, so I supposed, for see them I could not, owing to the thick fog which had so increased towards morning as to render it absolutely impossible to discern any object, even at the distance of a yard.

For this reason the captain had stopped his course, fearing for his own vessel, as well as wishing to avoid the risk of running down any small fishing or other boat, for we were now very near the coast. My dear Augustus, never did I salute the rising sun with so much fervour, with such joy and gratitude! Never for me had this beneficent luminary operated so prompt, so admirable a change! Its first appearance above the horizon was that of a globe of fire obscured by the damp vapour surrounding us, which was soon dissipated by its vivifying and warming light; when suddenly, on our left, we saw the shore of Hampshire in all the brightness of sunshine. Before us was the Isle of

Wight, with its celebrated rocks,—the Needles, — whose varied and picturesque form, and brilliant whiteness, now illuminated by the rays of the sun, were so beautifully contrasted with the blue of the sea. Some of them appeared like the remains of castles, their battlements and towers still rising above the floods; others, boldly elevating their pointed shafts in the air, looked like the steeples and spires of gothic churches.

Notwithstanding the sombre aspect of the deck of our vessel, the sun's rays soon produced a happy influence. The sleepers, male and female, began to rub their eyes; then half-open them; they afterwards stretched out their arms and legs, with the pretty yawns and contortions which accompany an awakening in the open air.

Many individuals now came on deck from below, climbing up from the hole, into which, thank God! I had happily abstained from descending the evening before. Then commenced certain duties of the toilette, upon which, out of consideration for you, I will draw the curtain.

In the midst of all this bustle, the powerful engine was again put into action; the wheels began once more to strike the surface of the water, covering it with white foam. In a few minutes we had regained all our former swiftness of motion, and the ship took the direction of the passage formed by the Isle of Wight and the coast of Hampshire, through which we had to go in order to reach Portsmouth.

I have already alluded to some persons on board, of apparently quieter manners, amidst whom I had taken refuge during the night. Among the rest, I remarked a tall man with a wooden leg, who appeared to be about fifty-five or sixty years of age. His countenance was frank and open, his manners agreeable: I listened with interest to some observations he made, during the long hours of darkness we had passed together, upon the condition of the naval force of England.

In the morning, after having mutually regarded each other several times whilst we were walking our corner of the deck, and having read in each other's countenance that an

advance on either part would not be ill received, I ventured the first, and we were soon seated by each other. He told me that he was going to London to perform a duty of which he was very proud, that of "paying his respects to his former captain." He pronounced these words with so marked an air of deference, and with an expression in his face of so much satisfaction, that, not knowing to what reason I might attribute this, I looked at him with surprise, particularly as a short time previously I had heard one of the passengers address him as "Sir James." This bespoke him a knight at the least; and supposing it probable that he was commander of a frigate himself, I could not comprehend this prodigious respect testified for a comrade. But he explained to me that his former captain "was no less a personage than the King of England himself." He had had the honour of serving under the Duke of Clarence when he was in actual service in the navy. To this sort of confidential conversation he added some anecdotes, every one

in honour of his ancient commandant; and the emotion he seemed to feel in relating them, was a sincere and affecting testimony of the profound attachment of this mutilated old veteran towards him, (now King of Great Britain,) who, when in the royal navy, "was so kind to every one under his command," and it was before him that he was now going to appear.

How altered must I seem to you! How changed my opinions relative to the English! Do you remember, my dear friend, our juvenile ideas, our childish prejudices? mine, particularly, for they were stronger than yours? The sort of hatred and unreasonable jealousy which fermented in our youthful breasts was, no doubt, the result of inexperience and habit; yet you would have found the same thing in England among young lads like ourselves, who never spoke of their contemporaries of France without the wild assertion and belief that one English boy was equal to three French. But were we not the same? Did I not myself

swear, in a moment of mad enthusiasm and enmity, that if 500,000lbs. of powder could blow up England, I would myself light the train and willingly perish in doing so? And some years later, when we were capable of judging for ourselves, have we not seen together the cool bravery of the English soldier? And the Prussian too, against whom the hatred of a Frenchman is almost national—this at least appears to be founded upon some reason, that of long and cruel reprisals,—do you remember once, at Charleroi, when we could not help applauding their manœuvring and their orderly advance under the fire of our artillery? And our hussars, notwithstanding their inveterate hatred, themselves cried out, "*Bravo! Nom de Dieu! c'est superbe!*"

After these examples of the change which seeing with one's own eyes may operate on opinions too often formed only on hearsay or on early prejudices, I think I may defend myself from the charge of inconsistency which will perhaps be made against me for my present admi-

ration of a country that, I confess, I formerly hated with all my heart. On this subject I cannot refrain from citing a few lines of a book I have lately been reading,—"Tom Cringle's Log—" one of the most interesting works I ever met with. It is a history of the adventures of a young naval officer during several cruises, and who in time obtains the command of the brig or schooner in which he has served. The work offers an endless succession of characteristic scenes, sometimes gay or affecting, sometimes terrible. They are depicted with a mixture of profound sensibility, and stoical indifference at the approach of danger or at the stern command of duty: in truth, the production is full of the energy and indomitable spirit of a stout-hearted sailor.

But let him speak for himself, when he is taken prisoner by some French soldiers under the orders of Marechal Davoust. I seize with avidity such a support for my opinions.

"Somehow or other I had drunk deep of that John-Bull prejudice which delights to disparage

the physical conformation of our Gallic neighbours, and hugs itself with the absurd notion that '*on one pair of English legs doth march three Frenchmen*;' but when I saw the weather-beaten soldier-like veterans who formed this compact battalion, part of the *élite* of the first corps, more commanding in its aspect from the severe service having worn all the gilding and lace away,—'there was not a piece of feather in the host;' I felt the reality before me fast overcoming my preconceived opinion. I had seldom seen so fine a body of men; tall, square, and muscular: the spread of their shoulders set off by their red worsted epaulets, and the solidity of the mass increased by their wide trousers, which, in my mind, contrasted advantageously with the long gaiters and tight integuments of our own brave fellows."

But I must return to our vessel, which began to recover a great part of its pristine charms in my eyes since she had advanced, on this fine morning, between the lovely Isle of Wight on the right, with its many country-houses seat-

tered over the verdant and woody heights, and the Hampshire coast on the left, where we saw Lymington, another watering-place. Further on was Southampton Waters; the town is situated some miles higher up; we could perceive the churches' steeples, masts of vessels up the river, &c. Upon our right we had already passed, at the entrance of the passage, the modest little watering-place called Yarmouth; after this, Cowes, and at last Ryde, at the other extremity of the island.

The neighbourhood of Portsmouth was announced by an immense quantity of ships of every description that we met on our passage, either at anchor or in motion, and which increased as we approached. I had but a very slight notion about shipping and the use of the different parts of the vessels, rigging, &c. Sir James kindly took upon him to explain many things to me which were highly interesting, when suddenly we heard the explosion of cannon which took place at regular intervals, and just as we issued from the passage into

Portsmouth Roads, we found all the men-of-war with colours flying, and each by turn sending forth the rapid flame and white smoke and loud thunder of their guns. It was in honour of the accession of William the Fourth to the throne!

I never witnessed a finer, a more imposing spectacle! We passed, shortly afterwards, amidst these immense and formidable towers of strength; every part of which were covered with officers and seamen, all hat in hand! or swinging them round their heads, shouting in reply to the cannon their enthusiastic Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah! As to my companion Sir James, his eyes seemed almost to emit flames; the brave chevalier was literally intoxicated with joy! He also seized his hat; I could not resist the example, and like him — like the thousands who saluted their sovereign, I also cried Hurrah! and with such real pleasure, that if it be true that the "voice of blood" ever speaks in the veins, my Scottish ancestry here made itself felt.

Adieu!

LETTER XXIII.

Desultory Letters.—Ascot Heath.—English Medals.—Luncheon.—Road to the Races.—Lady H.'s Cottage.—Ascot Races.—Betting with Ladies.—General Excitement.—The Winning Post.—End of the Race.

I TOLD you, in one of my first letters, that I should form no plan of composition, but write just as fancy or my recollections of past events might prompt. In this manner I prepared myself a means of going backwards or forwards in my narrations as I might find convenient. Of this power I intend to avail myself to-day; and you will please to recollect that the end I wish to accomplish, however indifferently it may be done,—I mean that of describing the habits and manners of the English,—will perhaps be advanced by these means.

Thus, then, from the magnificent spectacle which I accidentally witnessed at Portsmouth, in the year 1830, upon the accession of William the Fourth to the throne, I shall take a retrospective view, and give you the history of a gay visit that I made some years before to Ascot Heath. This place is one of the most celebrated in England for its races, and particularly for the "good company" which assemble there. I will also make use of this opportunity to endeavour to give you some further insight into English society in general, more particularly into that set in which I found myself during the three days that these races lasted.

The Countess of H. possessed a cottage in the neighbourhood of Ascot Heath. During the short period of the races, this pretty residence was the rendezvous of many of the first-rate fashionables. They met there, not only because of the mutual attraction existing between people leading the same sort of life, but from another and a

more matter-of-fact reason which I will explain.

I do not know that more is eaten in England than in other countries; but certainly more time is spent at table there than anywhere else. At Lady H.'s, for example, at her town-house as well as at Ascot, there was every day one of those luncheons, which fill up the interval between breakfast and dinner. Even after the latter repast, the eating still went on under the name of tea, the "never-ending tea," cakes, and fruits, &c. In the morning, after breakfast, at about one o'clock, a table was always prepared in one of the rooms, covered with a white damask cloth, and garnished with the most exquisite fruits, not forgetting, if you please, certain *térines de Nerac* just arrived from Chevêt. (The poor man has been dead a long time, but in France, you know, "*le Roi est mort! vive le Roi!*" and one may say as much for Chevêt, as his dearly prized—or priced?—commerce still continues.) There was cold game, poultry, wine

of all sorts, &c.; sufficient of it indeed to attract visitors in plenty, in whatever part of the world it might have been spread. Tea, the national tea, appeared to reign supreme over all the rest; the pretty china cups, whether of India, Sevres, or Wedgwood, ever filling as they were emptied.

In London, the windows of the drawing-room where the luncheon was spread, looked out upon St. James's Park. The chosen few from the passers-by were invited to enter by a sign from the windows; those who were intimates entered without invitation; and I have seen a dozen and more arrive in the space of an hour, to offer their homage to her ladyship, and also to partake of her hospitality.

But to return to the races: whether they take place at Epsom or Ascot, London feels their influence throughout the whole of its immense extent. The part situated in the direction, and particularly on the direct road, offers an incomparable scene of activity and

bustle : equipages are there of every sort and description ; for the magnificent is mixed up with the mediocre, the shabby, and even the ludicrous. And how should it not be so ? It is the national pleasure, the delight of the country, and the very lowest Englishman wishes to enjoy his part.

But besides the vast number of private equipages,—drawn by beautiful horses, and ridden by postilions dressed in little coloured silk jackets, grey hats, with the bouquet in the buttonhole, as well as the rose at the horse's ear, and which are passing at each moment,—there are at the same time stage-coaches filled with people inside and out, gigs, cars, even to the modest cart, all following the same route. The innumerable post-horses which London contains, are all put into requisition, and are engaged by the day at ten guineas and even upwards the pair, including postilions who rival those of the nobility in their appearance.

It was on the edge of the green plain

where the gay tents and stands were erected for viewing the races, that Lady H.'s cottage was situated; hidden, however, behind some trees which surround the plain. I was invited to spend the three days of the races there, and you will easily believe that I did not fail to be punctual both to the day and hour indicated. Several carriages, drawn up in the shaded alley which led to the door, forewarned me that the company was already assembled.

Notwithstanding my desire to make you acquainted with individuals and their manners, whenever I have an opportunity, I cannot but hesitate when I reflect upon the delicate ground on which I am treading, when I treat of persons not only enjoying the highest consideration in England, but who have been kind and attentive to me. This last feeling alone would secure my discretion; and when I add, that our hostess on this occasion is no more, and that her noble husband, who was universally loved and respected, has followed

her to the grave, regretted by all who knew him, you will think how natural is my reserve when it extends to every member of their family, and even to all who composed this brilliant party at the cottage on Ascot Heath. At least a score persons were scattered about in different parts of the garden, which, on the opposite side of the house from the entry, was sufficiently spacious. Others were in the dining-room agreeably occupied in enjoying the repast of which I spoke above. At that time of my life, I also possessed an appetite that was none of the smallest; so you may judge if, after a very amiable reception from Lady H., I did not readily attend to her recommendation of laying "in a stock of strength for the races." The hour for their commencement soon arrived, the carriages were announced, and we all departed.

How shall I convey to you any just idea of the spectacle which Ascot Heath presents on such a day? how attempt to number the

carriages placed in rows three deep all along the ropes which enclose the race-ground, and which extend from the starting-post to some distance, and again at the winning-post, the spot where thousands are lost and won by a neck-length of a horse,—nay, even by the length of the end of his nose, should he by a prodigious effort pass his rivals at the last nick of time? These carriages are generally open, and filled with elegantly-dressed women. The variety of colours in their dresses, as well as that of their parasols, green, blue, lilac, &c. adds to the beauty of the scene. Neither can I calculate the number of people on foot, who in triple and quadruple ranks, fill up the space left between the carriages and the ropes, and this for the distance of half a mile on each side: but amongst these there are many whom it is impossible to restrain, and who, carried away by their extreme anxiety to see the horses better, and particularly to witness their arrival at the winning-post, venture upon the sacred ground; and there you may judge of

the excitement which this pleasure produces in the English people. Every notion of that relative dignity which I have so vaunted is, for the moment, entirely superseded! The keepers on horseback,—and, if I recollect rightly, in the royal livery,—who are employed to preserve the ground unobstructed, then charge upon the intruders, and gallop along the sides of the ropes to force them back, striking them with their hunting-whips, and a general *déroute* ensues. This, as you may suppose, causes many a fall, and many a ludicrous adventure, which produce shouts of laughter from the bystanders. As soon as the sound of the bell, which is suspended at the stand of the judges and umpires, is heard giving the joyous signal that the races are about to commence, this general eagerness redoubles: pushes and blows are given and taken in plenty; but, as soon as the horses appear, everything else is forgotten.

The jockeys are mounted; and nothing can be more graceful than their method of break-

ing them, by giving them beforehand a gentle gallop, — as we say at tennis, *peloter avant partir*. They went and returned in this manner, in a gentle canter upon the smooth elastic turf, so that the ear could hardly distinguish the sound of their light and graceful steps; and when they passed before the different stands occupied by the fashionable ladies, the latter would immediately select a favourite. Lady Georgina bets a pair of gloves with Lord D. in favour of the "pretty pink jockey," whilst my lord bets on the "claret-coloured cap." Lady H.'s party had taken places in one of these galleries; and, not to be singular, I also bet my pair of gloves with one of the ladies.

But the second signal, which makes every heart beat, is given; the horses are ranged in a line, their eyes full of fire, their nostrils dilated. They appear to devour the space which they are going to fly over. The word "off!" is pronounced, and off they spring together, as if thrust forward by the same impulse. Then a general upset takes place amongst

the spectators; all their ideas, all their faculties, are contentrated in one,—"that the race has begun!" If the course is complete, and the horses have to make the great circle which surrounds the plain, then the latter is traversed in every direction by the numerous horsemen; who, being for the most part interested in the result of the contest, put their horses to their utmost speed, in order to see the rapid progress made by this mixed assemblage of blue, green, and purple, looking like a flight of pigeons which just skim the ground.

But soon one round is performed; for, instead of lessening, the rapidity of the racers increases. The general anxiety becomes intense; every eye is eagerly fixed on the direction in which they will re-appear. "There they are!" is repeated by thousands of voices. At this critical moment the ground-keepers charge, the lashes increase in force and violence; and those who are so beaten and pushed about are no longer cold and reserved Englishmen, but a set of madmen, so excited by emotion and

pleasure, as to expose themselves by hundreds to the risk of being trampled on.

But here they are, those admirable creatures! they near the post! the jockeys bend forwards almost flat on their horses' necks, in order to offer as little resistance as possible to the air; and in the midst of the clamours of encouragement which are resounding in their ears, they preserve their coolness, and their command over their horses, even until a few hundred paces from the point where victory will no longer be uncertain. Then commence the incredible efforts of these noble animals! They must be seen to be believed; those astonishing leaps, those springs which those who mount them know how to provoke, seeming almost to lift them from the earth with supernatural strength. The impulse is so great, that, when the point is gained and passed like a flash of lightning, they sometimes run half a mile before they are able to stop.

For my part, I lost my pair of gloves, and

the very pretty Lady Georgina won hers; and this scene, which has taken so long to describe, did not in reality last longer than a few minutes.

Adieu!

LETTER XXIV.

Ascot Heath.—George the Fourth.—A French "Romance."—Marchioness of W.—Windsor Castle.—My Apartment there.—Moonlight effect.—Nocturnal view.—Disenchantment.

WELL, here I am still on Ascot Heath. The interesting spectacle I tried to describe in my last letter, was repeated several times on that day, and on the following. Between each race the *beau monde* descended from the galleries to promenade on the turf: here, my natural inquisitiveness on such matters made me look for the marks of the horses' feet on it, to measure some of the tremendous springs that ensured the victory; and I found one twenty-two of my feet in length.

What increased greatly the interest of this

meeting was the presence of George the Fourth. (He almost always attended those races, being so near to Windsor.) During the intervals between the races, he was sometimes on horseback, accompanied by his brother the Duke of York, and went slowly through the crowd, now become as quiet and calm as ever. Every one bowed respectfully as he passed; and although the King was then without ceremony or suite, and dressed like every one else, yet the Duke of York kept carefully a pace or two behind him, and when he spoke to him would occasionally touch his hat. I cannot help mentioning this circumstance, as it returned forcibly to my memory not many months ago, when I saw on the Continent another King walking arm-in-arm with his brother-in-law, the latter a Prince Royal also of a powerful country. They were re-entering the palace, on returning from the park, where his Majesty had given a dinner to his soldiers.

Several of the morning visitors at the Countess of H.'s had been invited to dinner;

after which meal the company retired to the drawing-room. The windows opened on the lawn; it was a lovely summer evening, and the flowers from the garden, and those in the stands in the room, shed a delicious odour through the whole house. The tranquillity which reigned there had acquired new charms after so fatiguing a day; and some of the ladies were seated close to the windows, resting themselves and enjoying the fresh air. I was talking to a son of Lady H. (one of those very cousins of whom I spoke to you in my first letter),—we were speaking of France: suddenly I heard the sound of a piano issuing from the neighbouring room, followed by a pretty female voice, which began a French air; so well pronounced, and so well accompanied, that in the greatest surprise I rose from my seat, believing myself once more in a certain chateau which you and I know so well, where I had so often heard this very *romance*, and where I had myself learnt it.

The scent of a simple flower recalls many an endeared remembrance; but that which music awakens, particularly if it be the music of a soft and plaintive voice, is still more full of charm. Such influences are vague, uncertain, inexplicable; yet the emotion they produce is real, and by its power I found myself transported, I hardly knew how, into the room whence came the sweet voice.

The singer was the Marchioness of W., to whom I had been introduced in the morning. She smilingly said that I must not think she sang in order to attract me; but that, from what her friend Lady C. S. had told her of my love of music, they had both been certain I should come to the room on hearing the first words of the air. Why is it that almost every one to whom I venture to allude more particularly than to another, I am afterwards obliged to mention as the victim of some sad or melancholy change? She, who sung so sweetly! then young, beautiful, and

accomplished, with every advantage of situation, rank, and fortune; she, for whom life appeared only to promise pleasure and triumph, was soon after marked by Death for his prey, and this in the midst of preparation for a fête.

From the description I have given you of Lady H.'s little cottage, you will suppose that it could not contain the whole of the large family which met there during the three days; so we, young men, (that is to say, two of her sons, my brother, and myself,) were sent two miles off to sleep in Windsor Castle, of which place Lord H. was governor, and where he had apartments. We departed at night; our route was by the superb alley which runs through Windsor Forest. The royal castle had not then been embellished with all the magnificence that George the Fourth has since lavished on it. This expense was defrayed, if I am not mistaken, by the grant of an enormous sum, torn, with great difficulty, from the House of Commons, and which pro-

duced an universal grumbling through all the three kingdoms.

My brother and myself (after agreeing to visit everything in detail the next morning before we went to the races) were conducted to our sleeping-rooms. That which fell to my lot was situated in one of the angles of the castle, which is erected upon a platform on elevated ground, and commands a superb and extensive view of the country that surrounds it. Immediately on entering my apartment I began to examine it. The furniture was of ancient fashion, but in good preservation; the walls were hung with old damask, and decorated with cabinet pictures of the Flemish school. There was also a portrait of Queen Charlotte, the wife of George the Third; and I fancied that I found in this picture an expression of simplicity mingled with severity, which confirms what is related of this princess. The hearth was furnished with old gilt *chenets* with sphynxes' heads; the chimney-piece, of black marble, supported a time-piece

of beautiful workmanship, although of ancient date, and two candelabres of crystal; the carpet was faded, but still thick and soft.

My bed was in a little closet opening into this room. The window was a small gothic casement with coloured glass. When in bed, and my candle extinguished, the moon, which was shining resplendently, penetrated into my little retreat, and repeated the varied colours of the windows upon my curtains and on the floor. The effect was really extraordinary. It was late, and the perfect silence which reigned throughout the castle gave an almost solemn feeling to the moment. This happened at a period of my life when I had illusions that I still cherished; and, instead of sleeping, I abandoned myself to them.

What would I not have given to hear again the voice of Lady W. gently breaking the silence with that melody whose words still vibrated on my ear! Nothing would then have been wanting to render this scene completely romantic. My memory would have strayed

to the spot where I first heard that air: I thought of my friends in France; of that time of my existence when, my childhood scarcely passed, *je voyois tout en beau dans la vie! tout me paroissoit couleur de rose!* But after many agreeable reflections, in most of which I had an advantageous part, Dame Nature spoke; the want of sleep — to which, however romantic one may be, one must yield — began to make itself felt. I rose, to contemplate for the last time the beautiful planet which had awakened so many varied sensations; I opened the window; the pale light of the moon was shed over the massive tower of the castle, over the town and the country, where I could distinguish the silver windings of the Thames through the fog which now began to rise. All this appeared very fine at first; but besides the fog, which all rivers exhale at this hour, there is one which covers all England at night; it is, indeed, the cause of its renowned verdure, of its fresh vegetation, and also of the severe colds to persons who expose themselves to it. I

was on the point of forgetting this, when the damp, which I felt *in my somewhat light déshabillé*, charitably recalled it to my memory ; so, shutting the window, and drawing the thick curtain hanging by it, I returned shivering and disenchanted to my bed.

So, *bon soir !*

LETTER XXV.

A Trophy.—King Charles's Beauties.—St. George's Chapel.—French Armour.—Return to Ascot.—Days at the Races.

IMAGINE, Augustus, your friend Edward, with the ideas he had of the superiority of the French army over every other — in whose eyes the many victories gained by this army effaced its few defeats, — imagine him, I say, beginning his tour through Windsor Castle, by a room in which the first object that is shown to him is a *tricoloured* silk flag, placed there as a glorious remembrance of the Battle of Waterloo.

Just figure to yourself my face when I felt myself called upon to *swallow* — pardon me the expression — the following details: "His Grace the Duke of Wellington is obliged, conformably to ancient custom, to deposit every year in

the hands, or at the feet of his Majesty, a similar flag, as the price of tenure by which he enjoys the estates granted him by the nation as the reward of his victory."

At that time I had not even the small stock of philosophy which ten years more have given me, and every one of these words, — upon which the *bourreau d'Anglais*, who used them, seemed to lay stress,—was highly disagreeable to my ears. Then came the thought that I must in addition give a *pour boire* to the fellow for his trouble; and it struck me as so comically ridiculous, that it dispelled my ill-humour.

Amongst the suite of royal apartments was one which particularly attracted our curiosity; it contained the portraits of the soft blue-eyed beauties who had subjugated the heart of Charles II. "of joyous memory;" and as it would be improper to call them King Charles's mistresses, "Sir Peter Lely's beauties" is the designation they go by. The architecture of Windsor Castle has been preserved, and is

purely gothic. The external ornaments, the general colour of the stones, the passages, the staircases, every part, in short, is impressed with this character; and if, on winding through a gallery, we had run against a knight of high stature, and armed *cap-à-pié*, such meeting would not have appeared unseasonable, for my head was filled with such fancies as we went along.

The Royal Chapel, St. George's, which we saw also, is a superb piece of gothic architecture, the ornaments of which are of most exquisite workmanship. The choir is separated from the rest, like a second chapel erected within the first. Its entrance is secured by a double curtain, falling in large folds, fastened upon each side to give passage into the sanctuary. What first strikes one in a church where only two or three persons are assembled, is the profound silence that reigns, and the sudden vibration from the vaulted roof of the least sound, of the slightest noise; also the

half light, stealing through high windows, often themselves darkened by sacred pictures: then the unaccustomed atmosphere, whose coolness penetrates your clothing; but the principal thought is, "that you are in the temple of God!"

In entering the choir of Windsor Chapel, this impression is more than usually profound; for to this general feeling is added the idea, that, under the polished stones upon which you are walking, rest the remains of England's kings! That all their power, all their grandeur lies prostrate there in the dust, or in the horrible form of skeletons! As a strong contrast, at some feet above, "in light and air," are the stalls of the living peers of the kingdom, in double rows, reaching to the farther extremity of the choir; and above each of these envied seats are suspended flags, bearing their coats of arms.

The tower of the castle terminated our visit of inspection; and there, again, my national vanity was put to trial: but this time the dose was less revolting, for its great age softened its

bitterness. In a spacious hall was a collection of armour, and amongst others some cuirasses, pierced with holes made by arquebuses, upon which the lance and the heavy sword of other days had left deep marks of desperate combat. These were the reliques of the battle of Agincourt, where, as history says, "perished la fleur des nobles chevaliers de France." Our guide in this part was a woman, young, rosy, and pleasing; and when with her white wand she pointed to the broken armour, saying that they had belonged to French chevaliers found dead upon the field of battle, whether it was her sex's generosity, or her own peculiar perspicacity which caused her to divine what passed in a man's heart by the expression on his face, I know not, but she hastened to remark that all these wounds "were bravely received in front," for not one cuirass was marked in the back. This was "gilding the pill," it is true; but she did it so amiably, and with a delicacy of feeling so little to be expected in her sphere of life, that my brother and I felt grate-

ful, and her little parting offering was doubled in consequence.

But it was in a very hurried manner that we visited Windsor Castle: a day such as this was, — one on which were held, in the immediate neighbourhood, some of the gayest races in the world,—was ill chosen for the inspection of antiquities, and we were anxious to get off to our rendezvous at Ascot. In those days, my dear friend, I was, you know, *half a fashionable* myself; I had my tilbury and my "tiger;" and with a red carnation in my button-hole, one of Carruther and Callow's whips in my hand, lightly caressing with its white lash the neck of my spirited "Fidget," adorned with his rose on his ear, I again drove through the magnificent alley of Windsor Forest to return to the race-ground.

We were in truth rather late, for we perceived the royal carriages, in all their splendour, half a mile before us; the bright scarlet liveries of the servants contrasting with great effect with the dark green tints of the

superb forest trees. Some other equipages enlivened the scene, and the surprised and frightened deer, crossing the road in two or three bounds, rushed to hide themselves in some more tranquil spot.

Now, my good friend, add together three times in your imagination the twenty-four hours which I have described to you, (save and except the curiosities of Windsor, which we only saw once,) and you will have the history of the three days that I passed at Ascot.

Adieu!

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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